



WELCOME NOTE

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**DIRECTORATE OF
DISTANCE EDUCATION**

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M.A., SECOND YEAR

PAPER - IX

**GANDHIAN
LIFE STYLE**

**MADURAI KAMARAJ UNIVERSITY
MADURAI - 625 021.**

WELCOME NOTE

Dear Students,

Vanakkam, Namaste.

We welcome you to this Paper-IX Gandhian Life Style. This is the culmination of the previous papers. Various aspects of Gandhism are explained here in concrete terms with reference to the day-to-day life of Mahatma Gandhi. Ultimately what is our goal? The goal is to realize one's own full potential and to restructure one's own life style in such a way so that Gandhian (Sarvodaya) civilization may be established. Paper-IX provides an excellent opportunity for this. It may well be renamed as "Applied Gandhism with special reference to the day-to-day life". We invite you to utilize this opportunity to the maximum extent possible.

Kindly do the exercises given at the end of every lesson. This will certainly help you in facing the examinations with greater ease and confidence and further enrich you in many ways. Though attendance to the contact seminars is not compulsory, we would suggest that you should attend them. They provide an opportunity to meet the specialists in person, listen to them and discuss with them various issues and problems. You can also meet your fellow scholars. That would be a refreshing and enlightening experience. The lessons are written by Dr. S. Jeyapragasam. Dept. of Gandhian Studies and Ramalinga Philosophy, Madurai Kamaraj University

Syllabus

Paper IX - Gandhian Life Style

1. Roots of Gandhian life style and its unique features - The contemporary crisis and the emerging alternative life style movement.
2. Individual (personal) Life : Achieving human excellence and holistic development - ethical living - day-to-day living - Diet - Ways to inner Peace - Nature cure.
3. Family and Social Life : Sexual morality - Responsible parenthood - small family (limiting the population) - Care of the children, aged and sick - Beyond the family system : Ashram life - Face to face small communities - pluralism and diversities.
4. Political Life : Collective decision making and the place of consensus - Spirit of democracy - Swaraj and cooperative federalism - honesty and transparency.
5. Economic Life : Material and spiritual life - Basic needs and not greed: Simplicity and voluntary poverty - human centred and peace Economics - Beyond consumerism - self reliance and Swadeshi - Trusteeship mentality.
6. Eco-Life Style : To be in tune with nature - Eco-friendly behaviour.
7. The Spiritual practices - prayer and worship - Religion as a way of life - From religion to spirituality - Ethical religion - Inter-religious dialogue.
8. Gandhian vision of human, humanism, Ramarajyam, universalism. Gandhian world-view.
9. Relevance of Gandhian life style in a changing world - Gandhian life style and alternative life style movements of today: Example and case studies.
10. Field work / visit and Application : Review your current life style and increase its Gandhian elements - Interview three persons who lead a Gandhian life style - Practice bread labour and Swadeshi - organise alternative life style groups.

Note : This paper should be based on incidents from the life and work of Mahatma Gandhi.

Recommended Books

Chandra Sankar Shukla	:	<i>Gandhiji's View of Life</i>
Chandra Sankar Shukla	:	<i>Incidents in the Life of Gandhi</i>
Chandra Sankar Shukla	:	<i>Reminiscences of Gandhiji</i>
Mahadev Desai	:	<i>Day Today with Gandhi</i>
T.G. Tendulkar	:	<i>Mahatma : Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (8 Vols.)</i>
The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi	:	(relevant portions)
Pyarelal	:	<i>Mahatma Gandhi : The Early Phase</i>
Pyarelal	:	<i>Mahatma Gandhi : The Last Phase</i>
Ramarayan Chaudury	:	<i>Bapu as I saw Him</i>
Brigkrishna Chandiwalla	:	<i>At the Feet of Bapu</i>
Kakaswhep Kalelkar	:	<i>Stray Glimpses of Bapu</i>
William L Shiner	:	<i>A Memoir</i>
Krishnadas	:	<i>Seven Months with Gandhi</i>
Nirmal Kumar Bose	:	<i>My Days with Gandhi</i>
S. Radhakrishnan (ed)	:	<i>Mahatma Gandhi – Essays and Reflections on His Life and Work</i>
S. Radhakrishnan (ed)	:	<i>Mahatma Gandhi : 100 Years</i>

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திரு.வி.க. : மனித வாழ்க்கையும் காந்தியடிகளும்

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II M.A. Gandhian Thought

Paper IX · GANDHIAN LIFE STYLE

Note : Answer any Five questions.

All questions carry equal marks

Time : 3 hrs.

Max. 100 Marks

1. Examine the roots of Gandhian Life Style.
2. Discuss the salient feature's of an individual's Life in Gandhian perspective.
3. Outline the place of pluralism in Gandhian Life Style.
4. Examine the concept of voluntary poverty giving suitable examples from the life of Gandhi.
5. Explain the spirit of democracy from Gandhiji's Life.
6. "Gandhi lived in tune with nature" - Explain.
7. Give an account of Gandhiji's spiritual Life.
8. Outline the Gandhian vision of human.
9. Explain Gandhian world-view.
10. Share your experience in bread labour or give your experience in organising an alternative life style groups.

ROOTS OF GANDHIAN LIFE STYLE (Applied Gandhism) and Its Unique Features - The Contemporary Crisis and the Emerging Alternative Life Style Movements

Introduction

When some friends suggested to Gandhiji that he should set forth his ideas and ideals in a systematic and formal treatise, he is reported to have answered. "For one thing, I have no time. For another, I am still experiencing; Hence let the treatise develop slowly of itself, if it does at all". Gandhiji's own advice to his follower was as follows: "My faith in truth and nonviolence is ever-growing. As I am trying to follow them in my life, I too am growing every moment. I see new implications about them. I see them in a newer light everyday and read in them a newer meaning" (*Harijan*, April 1937). In the final analysis, the roots of Gandhian thought and life-style rest upon his metaphysical presuppositions, which introduce a strong subjectivist elements into his basic concepts, as well as a sustaining conviction that the morally right must necessarily be the most effective course of conduct in the long run. In order to comprehend and appreciate Gandhian life-style and his ethical thoughts we have to answer searching questions: What are the main basic concepts involved? What are the main postulates assumed or asserted? What are the hypotheses that may be derived from these postulates? What are the imperatives, prescriptions and principles that are offered? What are the basic beliefs from which the basic values spring?

According to Gandhiji, human is potentially perfect, basically good and inherently capable of truthful and loving conduct in all situations. What he/she needs is to understand and love his/her true spiritual nature. This demands, the discipline of suffering for the sake of truth and self-sacrifice for the sake of love. These beliefs are metaphysically complete and claim universality. They may be presented in a systematic form by arranging the essential propositions in a simple order of metaphysical priority and rational sequence. The most fundamental and crucial concept is Satya or Truth from which is derived Ahimsa or nonviolence. To Gandhiji, Satya and ahimsa are like two sides of the same coin. He pointed out in his *autobiography* that the only means for the realization of truth is ahimsa and that a perfect vision of truth can only follow a complete realisation of ahimsa. Elsewhere, he clearly mentioned that ahimsa and truth are so intertwined that it is practically impossible to disentangle and separate them.

Foundations and Essentials of Gandhian Thought and Life-Style

Satya, Ahimsa, Sarvodaya, and Antyodaya, Trusteeship and Non-possession, Self-reliance and Self-sufficiency, Simple and plain living and high thinking, Bread labour or Manual Labour, Self restraint, living at no-body's cost and Living in tune with Nature, Unity of all Religions, Unity of humankind, Swadeshi, Love of heritage, Voluntary Poverty, Harmony between Thought word and deed and Humanism, holistic vision, systems approach are the fundamentals of Gandhian

Thought and they form the basis or the roots of Gandhian life style and an analysis of the main features will indicate that the roots of Gandhian Life-Style are unique and dynamic in many ways. They are creative and ever growing and universally valid, not only relevant to our times and for the present generation, but also for the future generations as well. However any living system will change and Gandhism is a open-ended system.

Truthful Life in Practice and in Daily Life

In order to achieve harmony between the individual and the society it is necessary, according to Gandhiji, for an individual to achieve harmony within himself and with nature and the cosmos. If men and women are truthful and honest in their daily life, as individuals and in their personal relationship, they will also be truthful and honest, as members of the society. Further, all men and women must recognise any form of violence-mental, verbal and physical as a violation of the indivisible and irrevocable bond of unity that lies among them, under the universal law of material and moral casualty. Inequalities and injustices of all kinds must be resisted under the law. The real test of truth is in its realisation at the level of action rather than in its recognition at the level of intellect. Therefore, we must begin to change ourselves, before we try to change others and also alter our attitude of mind and bring out change of heart, rather than merely tamper with our external conditions and environments. In short, the disparity between belief and profession between profession and practice retard and counter-act the normal course, could release limitless powers, and energy for the good of others and ultimately for the good of all. Nonviolence and truthful life can be made effective, when the causes of violence and factors of untruth that arise out of violations of truth have ceased to operate. Similarly, conflicts and tensions can be resolved, when we refrain from forcing our personal prejudices and opinions and interests on others. In the opinion of Gandhiji means determine ends and no man is merely a means to the ends of another, since every man has the sacred right and duty, of self-determination. Bapuji followed and observed all those principles in his teachings and in his life-style.

In Gandhian Thought and Life-Style, truth is the sovereign and the most supreme principle, which includes numerous other principles. According to Gandhiji, truth or truthfulness ought to be the very essence and breath of our life. In general, truth is understood to mean that we must always speak truth as opposed to false-hood. However, we have to understand truth in a wider sense i.e., Thought word and deed and there must be harmony in all these three items, which is an essential feature in Gandhian conception of truth. Gandhiji gives an interesting example about the importance and glory of truth. If a person says, he will die for God's sake he will not make sense to others, what he means. On the other hand if he says that he will die for the sake of truth, his words will be well understood by those, who hear him. Our national motto, "*Sathyameva Jayathe*" implies that Truth alone prevails and the source of this motto is "*Mundaka Upanishad*". The immortal story of King Harischandra and expressions like "see no evil", "hear no evil", and "speak no evil" - which are expressed in proverbial portrayals by three monkeys - had great influence on Gandhiji and his life-style clearly indicate that forces of truth, justice and goodness positively triumph over

forces of untruth, injustice and wickedness. To seek Truth, to follow Truth and to establish Truth in one's life and daily living was Gandhiji's greatest passion in life. For Gandhiji, Truth and truthful life were natural rights and duties of every one and truthful life includes justice and the effort to establish it. Life is action and right action according to truth is the real purpose of good life and a good man is one who actually does or performs good deeds and actions and Gandhiji proved beyond doubt by his life-style that he was not only an able and good leader and reformer, but also goodman.

What distinguishes man from the rest of the creation is his extraordinary power of rationality or the power of thinking and closely associated with this faculty is the unique power of judgement and this wonderful power enables man to distinguish between truth and falsehood and to know the difference between good and bad, right and wrong. So, as self conscious and rational beings, we are fully aware of moral values like truth, love, non-violence and justice and we are also intrinsically aware of the fact that forces of truth and justice will always triumph over forces of false-hood and injustice. So, we have an important dictum that we may take an intellectual holiday, in the sense that we may stop reading seriously on a working day. But we must never take a moral holiday, since there is moral activity from creation to cremation and from cradle to grave. Gandhiji firmly believed in the dictum that no one should take a moral holiday and in all his activities and in his life-style never spoke false-hood and never took any moral holiday and this dictum was his inspiration as well as guiding principle in all his activities and in his life-style.

Immanuel Kant, the great German philosopher once remarked, "Two things greatly impress me in God's creation. The starry heavens above and the moral law and the law of Truth within". The whole universe is governed by this supreme moral law-call it Truth, Dharma or righteousness. Our scientists and philosophers tell us that nature is a cosmos and not a chaos. For Gandhiji, the principle of Truth and Truthfulness is not only a view of life, but also a way of life and every individual must strictly avoid taking a moral-holiday, which is indeed a moral crime against oneself, against the society and the nation. The transcendental view of Truth provides the basis for eternal principles of morality and serves as the fountain head for absolute values in the ethical field. The maxim "Truth is God" lifts and purifies and enables our minds above the age - old controversies about God in different religions. Above all, Gandhiji's declaration that Truth itself is God throws open the corridors and the doors of Mansion of Truth to every human being to seek, to strive and to realize truth, according to his capacity, without any privilege or authority being claimed by any caste, group or sector institution.

Importance of Satya or Truth in Gandhian Thought

Gandhiji was a relentless and passionate seeker and searcher after truth and in this gigantic process added new dimensions to truth and nonviolence. According to Gandhiji, the quest for truth, is the summum bonum of our life. He was great a votary of truth and nonviolence from his childhood and is the greatest apostle of truth and non-violence, after Jesus Christ and Lord Buddha. For Gandhiji, Truth is the only correct and significant expression for God. The word Satya is derived from

'Sat' which means "to exist". God is or exists, because truth is and exists. To quote Gandhiji "I have known God only as Truth. There was a time, when I had, doubts about the existence of God, but I never doubted the existence of truth. Truth is not something material but pure intelligence, which rules over the universe". In *Taitreya Upanishad* reference is made to chit as conscious force. If the Absolute is Truth, Beauty and Goodness, then the Absolute is not barren and static reality but is highly dynamic and at the sametime changeless, but its expressions are in change and in movement. What exactly do we mean, When we say, "Truth is God". According to Gandhiji, "Truth is the only comprehensive and essential attribute of God and other attributes are only partial expressions of the Absolute". In short Truth itself is the very embodiment of the Absolute, which is ruled, governed and guided by Truth. Gandhiji went a step further and tells us clearly that Truth is not merely an attribute or essential quality of God, but He is That and He is nothing, if He is not that. Therefore, the more truthful we are the nearer we are to God. In conclusion God as Truth and His law of Dharma or righteousness are not different, but one and the same. In short, Universe as a function of Truth and Universe as a function of the law of righteousness are identical. Gandhiji tells us that Truth is deposited in every human heart and the maxim "Truth is God" dominated and all the activities of Gandhiji and was the guiding principle, solace and inspiration in his life-style. Only a moral genius, like Gandhiji made the dramatic and psychological change from 'God is Truth to Truth is God which is the basis for his ethical idealism and spiritual humanism.

For Gandhiji, Satya or Truth was very sacred and the most supreme value in ethics, politics and religion. He regarded it as a philosopher's stone or the sole talisman available to mortal man. In the opinion of Gandhiji, Satya is Paramarthasatya or the highest of human ends. It transcends and endows value of Astha or the welfare, Kama or human affection and happiness, Dharma or the moral law and the Cosmic order and also to Moksha or salvation or emancipation. Above all, Gandhiji declared that Satya is the essence of Dharma, since morality is the basis of things and truth is the substance of all morality. Not only was truth the most important and an all inclusive principle to Gandhiji but it was also logically prior to all morality. No only was truth the most important and an all inclusive principle to Gandhiji but it was also logically prior to all the other human virtues and excellences. Further the moral law is the law of our being, as a objective and dependable as any law in the physical world. In the words of Gandhiji "There is an inner most centre of us all where Truth abides in fullness. Every wrong doer knows within himself that he is doing wrong.....". This is indeed a pointer as well as a stern warning to anti-social elements, black marketers and evil-doers. In short Satya includes holistic approach, ever expanding and transcending levels of consciousness and bringing about harmony in thought, word and deed. The fine and subtle differences and distinction between absolute truth and relative truth are crucial for the modern man. The quest and search for the absolute truth is a never ending and relentless process. On the other hand the relative truth at hand is ever vanishing and so it is ever fresh and most dynamic. In conclusion, Satya must be considered as the active power of evolution in the universe and it must be likewise in our society and the rejection of all external authority and factors as morally sacrosanct would be possible, only when truth and truthfulness are regarded as the highest values as well as the very foundation of the universe.

Nonviolence as a Creed and as a Policy in Gandhian Thought

The word Ahimsa or nonviolence literally means non - injury or more narrowly non-killing and more widely harmlessness, the renunciation of the will to kill and of the intention to hurt any living things and also the absention from hostile thought, word and action. As early as 1916 Gandhiji distinguished between the negative and the positive meanings of Ahimsa. In its negative form it means not injuring any living being whether by body or mind. In its positive form Ahimsa means the largest love and the greatest charity and followers of Ahimsa must love his enemy without any hatred and ill-will. The principle to be followed hate evil and not the evil doer. In the wider sense ahimsa includes truth and fearlessness. According to Gandhiji the path of ahimsa is the path of non-attachment and entails continuous suffering and cultivation of endless patience. At times, Gandhiji equated ahimsa with innocence and declared that complete nonviolence is complete absence of ill-will and hatred and that active nonviolence is good-will towards all life; Nonviolence in this sense is a perfect state and the goal towards which humankind moves naturally though unconsciously.

Gandhiji firmly believed that although ahimsa was universally applicable its exercise had to be exemplified by a few votaries, who took vows and underwent a comprehensive moral and spiritual training and would be able to observe the all embracing nature of total ahimsa. K.G. Mashruwala, a close associate of Gandhiji emphasized the distinction between anti-violence and benevolence, nonviolence or ahimsa. One cannot be benevolent and in the same breadth enforce a claim. Gandhiji declared, that one could enforce non-violence i.e. without violence against the usurper. According to Gandhiji ahimsa is intended and expected to convert rather than to coerce the wrong doer and the follower of ahimsa refuses to submit to injustice and is willing to undergo self-suffering trials and tribulations without resorting to violence. Further, Gandhiji realized that nobody could practice perfect nonviolence. So he chose to regard the notions of state, a nonviolent society and a nonviolent democracy as Euclidean models that could provide standards of assessment and incentives to alter exiting situation, Gandhiji wanted that more and more people must be prepared to accept the absolute moral value of ahimsa, not as an exclusive ideal or a pious hope, but as a widely relevant principle of social and political activities.

For Gandhiji, ahimsa was definitely a creed and the breath of his life. But, he sometimes, spoke of it as a policy to be adopted on prudential grounds and he called himself as an essentially practical man, dealing with practical political questions and laid down as is humanly possible, which implies a rigorous ethical discipline and in taking of Vows (2) Man for man, the strength of nonviolence is in exact proportion to the ability, not the will, of the nonviolent person to inflict violence, which implies that a government which renounces nuclear weapons is potentially capable of displaying ahimsa to an extraordinary degree (3) Nonviolence is without exception superior to violence. In other words, the power at the disposal of a nonviolent person is always greater than he would have, if he were to be violent (4) There is no such thing as defect in nonviolence. On the other hand, the end of violence is definite defeat (5) The ultimate end of nonviolence is definite victory. In fact where there is no sense of defeat, there is bound to be victory, which implies that the follower of ahimsa never aims at defeating anybody, but aims at achieving a desirable result.

For Gandhiji ahimsa as a creed represented an ideal to be reached, a fact of life, as well as an act of faith. The creed of ahimsa presupposes the existence of an immoral essence in the human personality, as well as willingness to die, while unwilling to cause harm or injury. Gandhiji repeatedly reminded his followers that man as animal is violent, but as spirit is nonviolent and the doctrine of ahimsa is nothing less and nothing more than a call to human beings to remind themselves of their moral and spiritual status and their dignity as human beings. Writing in *Young India* as early as June 1919 Gandhiji observed, "It may be long before the law of love and ahimsa will be recognised in international affairs. The modern machineries of government stand between and hide the hearts of one people from those of another. Yet we could see how the world is moving steadily to realise that between nation and nation, as between man and man, force has failed to solve problems". Ahimsa, as a policy, was regarded by Gandhiji, as the next best thing to Ahimsa, as a creed, rather than a mere rationalization of physical weakness or an expression of mere expediency. Although he stressed the moral necessity of ahimsa, he also wished to point out its political necessity in certain circumstances. Above all, Gandhiji tried to plead for ahimsa, as a policy, by using arguments to convince people of the futility of violence. Force is used, When men are filled with fear and what is gained through fear is retained only for as long as fear is. In the words of Gandhiji, Hitler and Mussolini on the one hand and Stalin on the other hand are able to show the immediate effectiveness of violence. But, it may be transitory. On the other hand, the effects of Lord Buddha's nonviolence persist, the more effective and inexhaustible it becomes and ultimately the whole world stands up and exclaims that a miracle has happened". Although some himsa is unavoidable in some cases, Gandhiji tells us that it is possible for the votary of ahimsa to be honest, strenuous and unceasing in his attempts to live up to his creed. His success will always be relative, but his faith in ahimsa must be absolute. To use force to prevent a child from rushing towards fire or towards an electric oven, is an unselfish act of ahimsa. Suppose a man runs curiously with a sharp sword in hand and tries to kill any one that comes in his way and no one dares to capture him alive. Any one who stops this madman, who is a great danger to the society, will certainly earn the gratitude and good will of their community and will be regarded as a benevolent and good man.

Gandhiji's appeal to ahimsa was ultimately an appeal to the conscience and the reason of the individual and an affirmation of the dignity and divinity of the human soul and to purity of means in the pursuit of social and political goals. To quote Gandhiji, "I have often said that if one takes care of the means, the end will take of care itself". (*Harijan*, February 1939). Gandhiji achieved far more than by his doctrine of ahimsa since he added a new dimension to nonviolence and converted a passive principle of meek submission to evil and injustice into a dynamic doctrine of nonviolent activity in the cause of truth and justice, a universal commandment to exercise the power of love and compassion, on the basis of inner strength, not outer weakness. It is indeed no exaggeration to say that the twin principles of satya and ahimsa, truth and nonviolence, exercised the greatest influence on Gandhiji in his childhood as well as in his adulthood and brought about revolutionary changes in his thinking as well as his life-style, both in South Africa and in India.

Welfare of All : Sarvodaya and Antyodaya

All great philosophers, men of religion, social scientists and social reformers did not have the courage and vision and insight to proclaim the philosophy of the welfare of all i.e. Sarvodaya and laid great emphasis on the welfare of the last person first i.e. antyodaya, as Gandhiji did for the sake of his countryman as well as for the people all over the world. The concept of Sarvodaya has several implications like one should not live at anybody's cost and should learn the philosophical and psychological implications of bread labour and that development and progress should be measured in terms of the last man and that nobody should be left out of the scheme-including national planning. We also find that in the present day democracy, though it is said that rule of the majority, of many, is the keynote of self-government. In reality, it is the rule by a few who are often mad after power and not really interested in the service of the poor and the downtrodden. Sarvodaya may well be regarded as India's distinctive contribution and Gandhiji's special contribution, to social philosophy and the roots of Sarvodaya go back to the days of Lord Buddha and Mahaveera, some 2500 years ago, when they preached love and nonviolence, as the panacea or the cure for all the ills and sorrows in those days. Among the main concepts that Gandhiji drew inspiration and re-interpreted from the ancient traditions were those of Satya, Ahimsa and Karmayoga as well as from his reading of Ruskin's *Unto This Last*.

In modern times, Sarvodaya is acclaimed as a dynamic philosophy, which can usher in the advent of a radically transformed humanity. It is indeed no exaggeration when Sarvodaya leaders proclaim that they seek to build a new society on the foundation of the old spiritual and moral values of India and are able to meet the challenges of modern age and counteract the bad effects of industrialization. The philosophy of Sarvodaya is integral and synthetic in character, since the development of the community and the society. Above all Gandhiji added new dimensions to Sarvodaya philosophy by his great emphasis on social and economic justice and by advocating a radical conception of Trusteeship plan and towards the end of his life became a theorist of spiritual socialism.

We may describe Sarvodaya as the totality - a great synthesis of Gandhian Thought in theory and in action. It is a beautiful expression and instead of using the name of the founder, the most meaningful and significant word is used as in the case of communism instead of Marxism. In the opinion of Gandhiji, in Sarvodaya order, people will be bound together by love and compassion, good will and understanding. Above all, there will be no armament race or threats of nuclear war or chemical war, since ornaments industry and nuclear missiles will find no place in Sarvodaya Social Order. In conclusion, in Sarvodaya social order, there will be no place for the party system and consequently no struggle for power and future society will be a form of polity very different from the politics of socialism, communism, capitalism and market economy and indeed we will establish the Kingdom of God on the earth or Rama Rajya of Gandhiji's dreams and let us work for and usher in the new social order, based on Gandhian teachings, techniques and life-style and establish everlasting peace in the world, which is threatened by nuclear and bio-chemical warfare and total destruction of mankind and civilization on the earth.

The Doctrine of Trusteeship and Non-possession

Gandhiji was greatly influenced by the idealism of *Ishopanishad* and he enunciated the important principle of trusteeship, that all things of the world must be enjoyed by renunciation. So, he wanted the rich should become trustees of their surplus wealth for the good of the society, since the society was only an extension of the family. Above all Gandhiji discovered great similarity in the conception of aparigraha or non-possession, as explained in the *Bhagavad Gita* and Snell's *Discussions of the Maxims of Equity*. Writing in the *Harijan* in April 1938, Gandhiji declared, "A trustee has no heir; but the public, which really implies that the community or the society has its, legitimate right in the property of the rich industrialists". Gandhiji did not suggest that the rich people should merely give alms to the poor but he loudly proclaimed that every citizen of the country including the poor and the downtrodden, should be entitled to bread labour and lead a decent and comfortable life. He did not preach against the wealthy people and did not speak ill of them, but he did try to persuade the wealthy to consider themselves to be the trustees of their wealth and to use the same for the benefit of the community, of the society. He did not ask the people merely to be honest and good in their daily lives, but demanded that everyman should live by his truth and die for it, if need be, because that is his duty, his religion, and his liberation. Indeed! Gandhiji's new principles like trusteeship plan, non-possession and bread-labour and total disarmament by all the nations of the world will positively change the destiny of humankind and establish a new world order based on truth and nonviolence and free from exploitation and injustice in political, social and economic fields.

Gandhiji's approach to trusteeship is dynamic and all comprehensive, based as it is, on his spiritualistic and humanistic approach to life and society. As Pyarelal observes in his essay "Gandhian Thought and Contemporary Society", "Trusteeship plan is a philosophy of life and organisation, a method of management, a method to bring about inter-personal relationships. It envisages a new structure and a new system of organisation based on nonviolence, welfare of all, the sharing of responsibilities", "fruits of production as well as decision-making". In fact, the word trusteeship, in the Gandhian sense implies more than what has been stated above. In fact, it indicates man's attitude to his entire life. Gandhiji and his followers point out that trusteeship idea is not only a duty but a religious concept. It is very remarkable and interesting to note that in *Thirukkural*, we come across moral principles on the lines of trusteeship doctrine of Gandhiji. "Good men put forth industry and produce wealth not for themselves, but for the use of the society (Chapter 22). He alone lives, who shares his wealth with others and he who does not recognise this duty is to be counted as dead, a burden to the earth", (Chapter 101).

It is rightly said that trusteeship plan provides the right means of transforming the present capitalist order of society into an egalitarian one. It gives no quarter to capitalism, but gives the present capitalists a chance of reforming themselves, depending on the assumption that human nature is never beyond redemption. In the words of Gandhiji, "Suppose, I have earned a fair amount of wealth either by way of legacy or by means of trade and industry. I must know

that all that wealth does not belong to me. What belongs to me is the right to an honourable livelihood, no better than that enjoyed by millions of others, The rest of my wealth belongs to the community and must be used for the welfare of the community". In short, non-possession and trusteeship should become the basic features of human beings individually and collectively. They cannot be brought about by mere laws or by violent activities. By persuasion, by educative methods, by change of heart, by change of our mental attitude, social changes leading to new social order have to be brought about. Of course legal and satyagraha methods may be used appropriately. In conclusion, Gandhiji's approach was holistic and he could not conceive one philosophy for society and another philosophy for industry and commerce. If trusteeship doctrine can work in commerce, it can equally work in industry. Thus, trusteeship plan is a plan of human relationships in all walks of life and the doctrine was formulated by Gandhiji as a means of radical social changes and reforms.

Self-reliance, Self-sufficiency and Swadeshi

According to Gandhiji real Swaraj or independence means self-reliance and self-sufficiency. However, self-reliance and self-sufficiency are relative concepts and they are to be linked with swadeshi. Self-reliance means self-restraint with regard to one's needs, so that a person always utilizes what is available to him and to his community and it is essentially a mental attitude. However, in modern world the attitude is to increase the wants in an infinite way, without any regard to the mode of satisfaction. In short, self-reliance and self-sufficiency are the two pillars of Swaraj. Gandhiji firmly believed that the villages or small communities should be the basic units of civilization, apart from the individual and the family and he stresses self-sufficiency at all these three basic levels. Above all Gandhiji's emphasis on self sufficiency at the small community or village level it related to his concepts of swadeshi or neighbour lines and all these concepts strengthen inter-personal relationships, encourage face to face communities and eliminate mass culture centralization and alienation. Indeed! self-sufficiency is a multi-dimensional concept, which can be applied in social, political, cultural and economical field. This concept has to be interpreted creatively, as Gandhiji used to do and not in a rigid and narrow way. In fact, self-sufficiency is not against global unity, since the slogan is think globally and act locally.

Mahatma Gandhiji introduced the charka to challenge the British exploitation of the Indian Village Industries and handicrafts and to provide employment for the starving millions of India. In 1922, Gandhiji called himself as a spinner, weaver and farmer and declared, 'It is my conviction that with every thread I draw, I am spinning the destiny of India. Without the spinning wheel, there is no salvation for our country'. It is very remarkable that at the age of thirty six, Gandhiji started to live a peasant's life in the South African farm. After reading John Ruskin's *Unto this last* he was fully convinced that the life of a peasant or a handicraftsman is very noble and worth living. He purchased a piece of land and started the Phoenix Settlement, the first Ashram started by Gandhiji in South Africa. Gandhiji himself tilled the land, drew water, grew vegetables and fruits and soon converted the land into an orchard and set an example to others and illustrating by his practice the dignity of manual work and bread labour.

It is indeed very remarkable that Gandhiji was self sufficient and self-reliant in various aspects and these items throw a flood of light on his life-style and his day to day activities. He was a bungi and did the work of a scavenger. He lived amidst the poor and the down-trodden and completely identified himself with them and served them to the best of his abilities and championed and worked for the cause of the Harijans or the untouchables. He was a nurse and a doctor and his nursing services during the Boer war earned many awards for him. He nursed the lepers and took special interest in their welfare. In short, there can be no parallel to Gandhiji, a leader of world reputation and yet amazingly simple, humble and above all self-reliant in many ways.

The votary of Swadeshi must, as his first duty, dedicate himself to the services of his immediate neighbours. He must study his surroundings and try to help his neighbours wherever possible, by giving preference to local manufacturers, even if they are of inferior grade or dealer in price that those things manufactured elsewhere. The spirit of swadeshi is not a cult of hatred or prejudice, but it is a doctrine of selfless service, that has its roots in the purest form of nonviolence, or selfless service. According to Gandhiji instead of mass production, there must be production by the masses in the villages. They have to produce for their local consumptions and when production and consumption both become localized the temptation and the greed to speed up production indefinitely and at any price, naturally disappear. Self-sufficiency at the regional level, if not at the village level, as for competition, marketing and exploitation will be minimised. Gandhiji visualised that each and every village must be a republic of its own or a village panchayat having full powers and so every village must be self-sustained and self-sufficient capable of managing its affairs, even to the extent of defending itself against the whole world (*Harijan* dated 29.8.46).

Unity of Religions and Unity of Humankind

Since Gandhiji had great and abiding faith in truth and nonviolence, he accepted the creative and stupendous force of religion in human history and was primarily concerned with the ethical aspects of religion and spoke of religion in terms of ethical living. To Gandhiji religion signified the ordered moral governance of the world and he emphasized the moral values of man, as a spiritual being which may be called "Ethical Religion". In the words of Gandhiji "For me, morals, ethics and religion are convertible terms. A moral life without any reference to religion is like a house built on sand. And religion divorced from morality is like sounding brass, fit only for making noise and breaking heads". According to Gandhiji the true religious attitude meant the voluntary acceptance and fulfilment of one's duties. In short the religious spirit implies observance of one's duties, not out of fear of penal sanctions, but born from a sense of inner compulsiveness generated by compassion and love for human beings.

In every religion, there are precious grains and we must draw in every religion a broad distinction between what is essential and what is non-essential between the eternal and the ephemeral, between divine and human, between universal and specific and socio-historical context. God and God-realization is the center of all religions which are different paths or gateways. Gandhiji accepted

the equality of all religions and also the unity of all religions. It is interesting to note that Gandhiji studied different religions of the world in a spirit of open mindedness and found that moral or ethical elements were common to all religions, illustrating beyond doubt the unity of all religions. That the ethics of piety, forgiveness, tolerance, compassion and love should influence all our activities was the basic view of Gandhiji. He himself practised by all those moral values and wanted that they should be practised by all social and political fields. In conclusion, all the great religions of the world have rendered vital service to mankind by their attempts at the gradual chastening of human brutalities like hatred, aggressiveness and exploitation and development of noble and good qualities like compassion, love, forgiveness, tolerance and service to their fellowmen preached and practised by Gandhiji in South Africa and in India.

Mahatma Gandhiji was not only a great national leader, but also a noble humanitarian, who believed in the unity of humankind. Romain Rolland regarded Gandhiji as the Jesus Christ of our times and was indeed the prophet of humankind. Gandhiji had the Spiritual vision of the unity of humankind and also firmly believed in the moral unity of humanity and accepted the ideals of World Parliament and World Federation. In fact, he became a world teacher, because of his eminent spiritual integrity and was a world prophet, who stood for universal harmony. By his emphasis on truth and nonviolence and purity of means in the field of politics he stressed the aspirations of noble humanity of all ages and heralded the dawn of a spiritual human history. For generations after generations, Gandhiji will be remembered as the world prophet of the divine kingdom of universal love, compassion, truth and non-violence and as one who dreamed of one world concept and federation of the free nations of the world. In short Gandhiji was a historic saviour of civilizations. He came to build and make a new history. His ideal was concord in place of discord, peace in place of strife and progress in place of retrogression.

Gandhiji did admit that nationalism is essential for the progress of any nation. But, he felt the highest concept is world community. Gandhiji once declared, "I want my country to be free. I do not want a fallen and prostrate India. I want an India, which is free and enlightened. Such an India if necessary, should be prepared to die, so that humanity may live". The foundations of one world or world community is based on Gandhiji's emphasis on the perfectibility of man and in the conquering power of human mortal consciousness. We also find that Gandhiji stood for the sanctity and supremacy of the human conscience and his acceptance of spiritual determinism gave him supreme faith in the inevitable and ultimate emergence of the nonviolent society, leading to world community. Above all, in Gandhiji, spiritual consciousness is the primary concept and so he believed in the essential unity of man. He believed that Indian nationalism should be a step towards internationalism and unity of humankind.

Mahatma Gandhi's Sarvodaya project is a new and alternative model of society, which is intensely humanist-oriented towards the needs of the community as a whole and paves the way for the establishment of a new world order, and world federation for peace, progress and prosperity. It is indeed no exaggeration, when we declare in unequal terms that Gandhiji was the first in the modern world

to apply the same code of conduct both to the personal life of individuals and to the public life of communities and nations and his appeal to the individuals and to the nations of the world reflects his integrated approach to life. He never admitted any dichotomy or watertight divisions in one's life, behaviour and activities. Gandhiji himself was a totally integrated person and advocated Gestalt or total approach to the world problems. Essentially, Gandhiji, the politician, the social reformer, the ashramite, the peacemaker and the internationalist, were all one and the same person. In fact, Gandhiji wore no masks, nor did he ever disguise himself. Underlying Gandhiji's approach to life and its activities was the belief and abiding faith in God or Absolute Truth, unity of life and above all unity of humankind. What is the secret of Gandhiji's great success and his dynamic life-style? Gandhiji himself answered thus. A clear heart and a clear conscience, a cool head, regular communion with God (regular and heartfelt prayers to the Almighty), abstention from carnal food and pleasure, no alcohol, no smoking and no condiments and a strict vegetarian diet and above all love and compassion for all my fellowmen in the world. (For any academic enquiries write to Dr.S.Jeyapragasam, Prof. & Head, Department of Gandhian Studies & Ramalinga Philosophy, Madurai Kāmaraj University, N.M.R. Subbaraman House, 3, Vallabhai Road, Chokkikulam, Madurai-625 002. Cell: 98430-40226, Resi: 0452-2310090).

Exercise

1. Examine the roots of Gandhian life-style.
2. Discuss the basis for the Gandhian life-style.
3. Discuss the unique features of Gandhian life-style.
4. Explain the contemporary crisis and the emerging alternative life-style movements.
5. Give an outline of alternative life-style movements.

Field Work / Applications

1. Examine your own current life-style and compare it with that of Gandhian (alternative) life style.
2. How you will move towards Gandhian life-style within a well defined time frame.
3. Encounter three persons who practise Gandhian life-style in their day to day lives.

**Achieving Human Excellence and Holistic
Development - Ethical Living - Day-to-day Living
- Diet - Ways to Inner Peace - Nature Cure**

We have already dealt with "holistic development" in paper IV *Gandhian approach to science, technology and development*, "ways to inner peace" in paper III *Truth and nonviolence* and paper VI *Satyagraha and peace making* and "nature cure" in paper IV and also in paper V. So we do not repeat those things here. Kindly read them. We give only additional informations on these items.

Ethical Living

Today as the moral crisis deepens, we realise the need for ethical life style. As humans acquire enormous power due to the revolutionary growth of science and technology, we experience calamity due to falling ethical standards. Ethics is the survival need of the hour.

Mahatma Gandhi insisted the need for ethical living and he himself is a monumental example for this. He saw ethics as the common denominator of the various religions. He was a great visionary and far ahead of his times. Now let us examine the base of Gandhian ethics-truth, nonviolence and ethical means.

Gandhian Life Style

Truth is God-Harmony between Thought, Word and Deed

The Greatness of Man

Among the living beings human beings, are considered to be superior because of their brain capacity, thinking, feeling and willing. The reflective consciousness, self-consciousness, reasoning power and power of judgement, and the ability to change are all well developed in human beings. They are superior not merely because of their erect posture but by their orderly, systematic way of life. Human beings are only a stage in evolution and the human beings are the connecting links between superior beings and lower beings. Today the violent jungle law disappeared from human beings. They are living with social consciousness as well as national and international awareness. The future beings will live with love and unity of humankind as the fundamental laws.

The Life of Style

Each and every human being has a definite conception and purpose about life. They live according to their faiths. They live with some purpose. The faiths, goals and values differ from time to time, from society to society. Within the same society we have different conceptions about and different ways of life among the members of the community. When life style of individuals contradicts with

each other, they fight with each other. When they respect the life styles, sentiments, beliefs and faiths of other individuals, they live in peace. The life style of each individual depends upon the philosophy of the individual. The tradition, the environment and the time in which he is living play important roles in moulding the philosophy of the individual.

The Core of Gandhian Philosophy

The core of Gandhian life style is Truth and Nonviolence in Gandhian Philosophy: Truth and nonviolence are the ultimate laws of being. Knowing this fundamental truth is being in it. That is the purpose of human life according to Mahatma Gandhi. He considered life itself is an experiment to know the ultimate truth. One of the Upanishads raises the question that what is that knowing when everything is known? Gandhian conception of 'TRUTH' is similar to this. He explains the word 'truth' in the following words, "For me, truth is the sovereign principles. This truth is not only the relative truth of our conception, but the Absolute truth, the Eternal principle, that is God's" (*The Story of my experiments with truth*, P. XI).

Experiments with Truth

Mahatma Gandhi conducted many experiments in order to know the different dimensions of the supreme Truth. The supreme Truth is not outside the individual being. Gandhiji says that 'Truth is What the voice within tells you' (Mahatma - Tendulkar, T.G. Vol. III. P. 144). His life was a pilgrimage, a search towards the great Truth, which makes all the empirical truths possible. He named his autobiography as 'The Story of My Experiments with Truth'. In the preface he says that he was not interested in the narration of incidents and happenings but how he conducted so many experiments in order to know the fundamental Truth. Among his experiments political experiments are known to the world but not the other experiments like the experiments in education, experiments in nature cure, experiments in the spiritual life, experiments in family life, etc. Among his experiments the spiritual experiments are considered as very important because he says his life purpose was to meet God face to face. All other experiments are the supporting experiments to this. In the life of Mahatma Gandhi, God and Truth are not different from each other. They are one and the same. He says, 'Our life is a long quest after Truth, and the soul requires inward restfulness to attain its full height'. (*Truth is God* Ed. R.K. Prabhu, p.61). According to Mahatma Gandhi, the very purpose of our life is to realise Truth. He also said, sometimes, he got the rare glimpse of that Great TRUTH.

Truth and Nonviolence

Truth and nonviolence are not philosophical concepts or religious concepts, but they are actual problems to Mahatma Gandhi. They are not different from each other. In the beginning they look like two different concepts. But, in the ultimate level, they merge with one another. Truth is the supreme value and nonviolence is the way to reach that supreme ideal of life. He says, 'Truth and nonviolence are both the means and the end, and given the right type of man the

legislature can be the means of achieving the concrete pursuit of Truth and nonviolence'. (*Mahatma* by T.G. Tendulkar, Vol. IV, p.161). In the life of Mahatma Gandhi the means and the ends are not different from each other. Among the two nonviolence is very important because it leads one to truth. The means are more important than the end. The means are within the reach of the individual. The means are in the present. If an individual realises some errors in his path, he can correct the error immediately.

Gandhian Concept of Truth

Mahatma Gandhi was a spiritualist who believed in the existence of one supreme God. In his life, he gave so many references on God. For him, God alone is immortal, imperishable. God alone is truth and everything else is transitory and illusory. His life is God oriented life. His consciousness is filled with God consciousness. He emphatically said that it is impossible for him to live without the faith in one supreme Truth, which is God. He says that purity of body, mind and soul are needed for the realisation of God. In his life, he always lived towards that perfection. It is difficult for the mortal being to know in what way God is acting. God decided everything according to his own way. God cannot be reached by proofs, arguments and theories. That is why Gandhiji was never interested in the intellectual arguments. Purity of heart, simplicity and self surrender are needed for God-realisation. He said that he can live without air, without food but not without faith in God. He committed so many mistakes in his private and public life. In his way to realise the supreme Truth, he faced so many problems. He openly accepted his mistakes in his *Autobiography* and therein lay his greatness. Evolution is through errors. Through mistakes, human beings learn the lessons. In his experiments Mahatma Gandhi failed so many times and realised his limitations. From movement to movement, from errors he got new ways and directions towards the goal. ---Absolute Truth. For example when people acted violently during the Non-co-operation Movement, he realised his mistake and openly said and wrote about his mistakes. He recorded this in his *Autobiography* under the title 'The Himalayan Blunder'. 'The openness and acceptance of mistakes are there in the life of Mahatma Gandhi. Whenever he realised a new light towards Truth, he changed his views and life style according to that new light'. He said I would like to tell the delight readers of my writing and to others who are interested in them that I am not at all concerned with appearing to be consistent. In my search after Truth, I have discarded many ideas and learnt many new things. Old as I am in age, I have no feeling that I have ceased to grow inwardly or that growth will stop at resolution of the flesh. What I am concerned with is my readiness to obey the call of Truth, my God, from moment to moment and, therefore when anybody find an inconsistency between any writing of mine, if he had still faith in my sanity he would do to choose the later of the two on the same subject. Harijan 29.4.1932, p.2). For Mahatma Gandhiji, Truth was the central theme for the satyagraha. The word satyagraha means holding the path of truth. It is both the way and view of life. Unless nonviolence is based upon Truth, it loses its very life itself. The satyagrahas must be based upon truth/justice. To-day, because of Mahatma Gandhiji's life and works, the word satyagraha is a common word. Politician who use this technique in their organisation do not know that satyagraha must be based upon Truth. The

technique lost its meaning and power, because of its wrong usage. For Gandhi, truth is the life principle. He says 'I deal with truth' as the Satyagraha Ashram owes its very existence to the pursuits and the attempted practice of truth' (*From Yeravda Mandir*). In Gandhian life, *vrathas* (Vows) play an important role. For him following the *vrathas* are very essential for the spiritual life. Spiritual life is open only to the human beings and lifts human beings towards perfection. So, he wrote the need for the vows in his letter from Yeravada Mandir. Among the vows truth comes first. This shows that Truth is the life in the Gandhian way of life. A satyagrahi must follow it if he is really a satyagrahi.

Gandhian conception of truth -- God is similar to that of Advaidic Nirguna Brahman. It is nameless and formless. It is the basis for everything and everything exists because the every existence is Brahman. He says, "The word Satya (Truth) is derived from 'sat' which means 'being', Nothing is or exists in reality except Truth. That is why 'sat' or Truth is perhaps the most important name of God. His conception of God is both form; and formless. He used to refer to God in the name of 'Ram'. The name 'Ram' is closely associated with the life of Mahatma Gandhiji. When he was assassinated by an orthodox Hindu, he breathed his last breath with the name 'Ram'. He used the name 'Ram' for God because of his Vaishnava family background. Their servant maid Rambha introduced 'My Ram' the Rama of our prayers is not the historical Ram, the son of Dasaratha, the king of Ayodya. He is eternal, the unborn, the one without a second. Him alone I worship (*Truth is God* Ed. P. Prabhu p.48). He also says, 'To me, therefore, Rama, described as the Lord of Siva, son of Dasaratha - the king of Ayodhya is the all powerful; essence whose name inscribed in the heart removes all sufferings mental, moral and physical'. He used the term 'Ram' in the sense of God - Allah, Jesus Isvara. They are convertible terms for him; (*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Government of India Publication, Vol. XXVI - p.28). In the religious life of Mahatma Gandhiji, there is a fine blending of different religions of the world and they are like the different paths to the same end. There are truths in every religion but no religion is complete. Truth is not the monopoly of any religion. Man must raise himself above the religion to realise the truths of human life. The word Truth was used by Gandhi with different meanings. Sometimes he is using, the word 'Truth' in the empirical sense. Sometime he is using the word in the Transcendental sense. When he says the purpose of life is knowing Truth, he is using the word in the indescribable transcendental sense. He says, 'Nobody in this world possesses absolute truth (*Mind of Mahatma*, Prabhu (ed) p.45). The absolute Truth and God are one and the same. The search for absolute truth is the search for God. In the phenomenal world, phenomenal truths are possible because of the existence of that Great Truth has so many dimensions. In the life of Mahatma Gandhi, Indian religious tradition has a great influence. The ahimsa doctrine was the key concept in Jainism. The theory is known as *anekantavada*. They explain this view with the example of the blind men and the elephant. The six blind men viewed the elephant in six different perspectives and all the perspectives are true according to them. However, they are all partial truths. The reality is more than the sum of these six perspectives. This is similar to the debate on relative truth and *Absolute Truth*. Gandhiji was not interested in the epistemological arguments and intellectual gymnastics. On so many occasions, he avoided arguments for the existence of God, Religion as well as spirituality is the matter of faith and not merely the matter of reason.

Truth and Action

In Gandhian philosophy, Truth is an existential problem. One must live according to the light of the truth. Not merely speaking truth is enough but one's own life must be based upon Truth. Truth in thought, truth in speech and truth in action must be combined together. Then only, life is meaningful. One must renunciate everything for the sake of finding out truth. Truth alone will endure, all the rest will be swept away before the tide of time. The only reality is truth and everything depends upon truth for their existence. Gandhiji illustrate the life of Prahalad. Prahalad opposed everybody who stood in his path towards Truth. For the sake of finding out truth he renounced everybody including his beloved father. For a search of Truth. In his own words, "Death is at any time blessed but it is twice blessed for a warrior who dies for his cause that is, truth (*Mahatma* - T.G. Tendulkar - Vol. p.237).

Since every individual inherently embodies truth, he is divine and spiritual in nature and so Gandhiji firmly believed that every man embodies a portion of truth i.e. a soul possessing soul force. As truth is the substance of morality, man is a moral agent to the extent that he embodies and seeks truth. By truth we do not mean merely abstentions from lies - not just the conviction that honesty is the best policy in the long run - but we must be ruled, governed and guided by the law of truth at any cost. In short devotion to truth must be the sole aim and purpose of life, since truth alone really sustains us at all times. If the observance of truth and truthful life were easy and a bed of roses and if truth cost one nothing and were all happiness and ease, there would be no beauty about it. The immortal story of King Harichandra and the great trials and tribulations undergone by him to uphold truth, clearly indicate that truth and righteousness will ultimately triumph; over forces of untruth and injustice and adharma. Though untruth and dishonesty of ten seem to win in the initial stages, in reality truth and honesty will; win in the end. We do not always know wherein lies our good and it is therefore the best way to assume that good always comes from following the path of truth and justice. But in modern times, we find that there are only limited persons, who follow the straight and narrow path of truth and justice, but they are "the salt of the Earth and it is they who keep society together and not those, who sin against light and truth".

(*Young India* : December 1921)

Among the vows of Satyagraha Ashram, Truth comes first. Here this is a relative truth. The absolute truth is the ideal which is the state of being. The relative truth is merely knowing. In the absolute sense, Mahatma Gandhiji identified Truth with God. For him the name for God is truth. Gandhiji was a social and political reformer whose activities spring from his metaphysical theories. In the metaphysical sense, he is using the word "Truth" in the absolute sense. In the physical sense he is using the "Truth" in the empirical sense. Both are connected with each other. The empirical leads the follower to the Absolute. He says I have known God only as Truth. There was a time, when I had doubts about the existence of God, but I never doubted the existence of Truth. The Truth is not something material, but pure intelligence. It rules over the universe. Therefore, it is Iswara or the Lord.

Truth and Life-style

In the Western tradition, philosophy and religion are separated from each other. Each discipline studies man from different angles. A philosopher need not practise what he meditates. A religious man simply follows what the scriptures say. Philosopher Hume may refute the existence of the soul theoretically and at the same time may behave as though he owned a soul. In the case of Buddha or Mahaveera, it is impossible for them to live this kind of life. They must practice what they preach. In Indian philosophical tradition, philosophy and religion go together. Indian philosophy emphasises the way of life. View of life must follow way of life. In this sense in India, philosophy and religion are inseparably related with each other, Knowing something is not enough but being in that state is needed. Mahatma Gandhi's life is the product of Indian religion - philosophical traditions. So he not only preached but practised what he realised as truth.

In the life of Mahatma Gandhi, we can see the harmony between thought, word and deed. When he realised the injustice committed to him, he decided to fight for justice and he systematically worked for that in thought level, spoke about that and worked for that. He organised meetings and acted upon that plan. In many people, there is a complete gulf or gap between what they know, what they speak and how they act. Even knowing fully well that something is bad and poisonous, they used to defend their disorderliness. They used to talk about one thing and do the just opposite thing. The Schizophrenic life of modern man can be illustrated with the example of atomic explosion tests and researches. He knows fully well that atomic explosion is destructive to life as a whole. Then why he is testing the atom bomb? Duality is the sign of disease Modern man suffers with the disease of alienation. He does not know his worthiness, he does not know how to live with the nature because he is thinking inside in one way, speaking in another direction and acting upon a new direction. This is the pathetic condition of life, The problems of Gandhian philosophy are the problems of man and his relations with fellow humans, nature and God. Gandhiji lived an open life which had no secrets. His life was documented very carefully by the close associates of him. He himself said that his life is like an open book. The *Autobiography* says that from his early years he was in search of truth. The spiritual evolution of Gandhiji happened at a very early age in the direction of Truth. He says that he never uttered, a lie to his parents or teachers. He recorded how his school teachers advised him to copy the word 'Kettle' and he refused to copy from his class mate. The drama of Harishchandra Purana had an impact on the life of Gandhiji. He asked himself why everybody should not follow the truthfulness like Harishchandra?

From "God is Truth" to "Truth is God"

God is for Mahatma Gandhiji, the very life itself. He says, I may live without air and water but not without Him. You may plug out my eyes, but that cannot kill me. You may chop off my nose, but that cannot kill me. But blast my belief in God and I am dead. (*Harijan*, May, 14, 1938, p.108) Gandhiji's search for God leads him to truth. Upto a certain period he thought 'God is Truth'. In one particular phase of his life (1929) this view was changed. He shifted the emphasis

from 'God is Truth' to Truth is God'. Gandhiji gives some reasons for this change of view. Firstly, the word God is vague and has different meanings for different individuals. But Gandhiji has 'never found double meaning in connection with 'Truth'. Therefore, Truth is a better term than 'God'. Moreover Gandhiji regarded God to be Ultimate Law or Principle or idea. God is never, philosophically speaking, a person. Gandhiji has repeatedly emphasized that he does not believe in a personal God. Truth, on the other hand, does not connote a person. It is always personal. It may well be understood as an idea, Principle or Law. Furthermore Gandhiji finds that God, understood as other than Truth can have no universal appeal. Atheists have delighted in denying the very existence of god. But nobody is able to deny the existence of Truth, not even atheists. In fact Truth itself is their God, and if understood in this light, even atheists are believers in God in the same sense in which Gandhiji believes in God. Lastly in the name of God and religions people have committed many atrocities. They worship God as anything and everything but never as Truth and therefore have indulged in lies, massacres of people without caring whether they were innocent or guilty, men or women, young or old. If we regard Truth as our God we cannot dare to indulge in barbaric and immoral acts. So he preferred and shifted his view from 'God is Truth' to 'Truth is God'.

When and Why Gandhiji Arrived at the Maxim : 'Truth is God'

After returning from the Round Table Conference from London Gandhiji addressed a big gathering of conscientious objectors in Switzerland in December 1931 and on this historic occasion, he made the famous change from the traditional dictum "God is Truth" to the most logical and psychological change, "Truth is God". He was very anxious to disarm atheists' criticisms as there were many atheists present at the meeting, who still followed the path of conscientious objections to war. Gandhiji had great sympathy for them and so he proclaimed, "I have come to the conclusion that the definition, 'Truth is God', gives me the greatest satisfaction. When you want to find Truth as God, the only inevitable means is love and non-violence and since I believe that ultimately means and ends are convertible terms. I should not hesitate to say that "God is Love". On many occasions we come across denial of God by atheists, but denial of Truth we have not known. Mr. Bradlaugh a staunch atheist, whom Gandhiji knew well, did not relish the remark of Gandhiji that he was a god-fearing man. But, he liked and appreciated the remark that he was a truth fearing man. In order to disarm the strong criticisms of Mr. Bradlaugh and other atheists, Gandhiji made the revolutionary and epoch-making and universally acceptable statement. "Truth is God". Further, after a continuous and relentless search and research after Truth for many years as explained in his *magnum opus*, "*The Story My Experiments With Truth*". Gandhiji came to the conclusion that Truth is God and the nearest approach to Truth is through love and non-violence. We also find that God is Truth is an incomplete or statement sentence. On the other hand the Truth is God is the fullest expression of our meaning in so far as it can be set forth in human speech or language.

What exactly do we mean when we say "Truth is God"? According to Gandhiji, Truth is the only comprehensive and essential attribute of God and other

attributes are only partial expressions of the Reality. In short, Truth itself is the very embodiment of the Absolute, which is ruled, governed and guided by Truth. Gandhiji went a step further and tells us clearly that Truth is not merely an attribute of God, but He is that and He is nothing, if He is not That. Therefore, the more truthful we are, the nearer we are to God. In the opinion of Gandhiji, Truth is God is more consonant and in harmony with facts, because in this world, there is nothing besides Truth. In this sense Truth must be understood in a wider sense in Truth as full of intelligence and consciousness. As such, God as Truth and His law of dharma of righteousness are not different, but one and the same. In short, Universe as a function of Truth and Universe as a function of the law of righteousness are identical. Writing in *Young India* Gandhiji declared : "Truth is my God; Non-violence is the means of realizing Him". To Gandhiji Truth and Ahimsa are the obverse and the reverse of the same coin. The quest for Truth is the summum bonum of our life and Truth is deposited in every human heart and so Truth or *Satya* is the perfect expression for God. The word *Satya* is derived from *Sat* which means to exist, God is or exists because Truth is and exists. To quote Gandhiji, "I have known God only as Truth. There was a time, when I had doubts about the existence of God. But I never doubted the existence of Truth. Truth, is not something material but pure intelligence, which rules over the Universe. In *Taitreya Upanishad* reference is made to *chit*, as conscious force, If the Absolute is Truth, Beauty and Goodness, then the Absolute is not barren and static, but is highly dynamic and at the same time changeless, though its expressions are in change and in movement.

Harmony between Thought, Word and Deed

In the field of Ethics or morals, Truth is the most supreme and the most sovereign principle which includes numerous other principles. According to Gandhiji truth or truthfulness ought to be the very essence and breath of our life. In general, truth is understood to mean that we must always speak truth as opposed to falsehood. However we have to understand truth in a wider sense i.e. Truth in thought, in speech and action. In other words, one must be pure, noble and upright in thought, word and deed and there must be harmony in all these three items which is an essential feature in Gandhian conception of truth. To seek truth, to follow truth and to establish truth on one's life and in daily living was Gandhiji's greatest passion in life. For Gandhiji truth is a natural right of everyone has to reach the goal of life is attaining the Absolute Truth. In conclusion, truth includes not only purity and harmony in thought, word and deed but also justice and goodness and our sincere efforts to establish justice. Life is action and right action is based on justice, goodness and truth and a good man is one, who actually does or performs good deeds or actions. As self-conscious and rational beings we are fully aware of moral values and we are also intrinsically conscious of the fact that forces of truth and justice and righteousness will always triumph over forces of untruth, injustice and wickedness. In conclusion, we must not only seek and strive for, harmony between thought, word and deed, but also aim at continuity and progress in such a harmony and orderliness, In the ultimate analysis, we arrive at an important dictum; "you must never take a moral holiday", since there is moral activity from creation to cremation and from cradle to grave. For Gandhiji, the principle of truth and justice (non-exploitation) were not only a

view of life, but also a way of life and every individual must avoid taking a moral holiday which is indeed a moral crime against oneself, against the society and the nation. The maxim, "Truth is God" lifts and purifies and enables one's mind above the age-old controversies about God in different religions.

In conclusion, Gandhiji's declaration that Truth itself is God throws open the corridors and the doors of the Mansion of Truth to every human being to speak, to strive and to realize Truth, according to his capacity, without any privilege being claimed by any caste, sect, group or institution. Expressions like, "see no evil, hear no evil and speak no evil", the favourite theme of three proverbial monkeys with Gandhiji - clearly indicates the co-ordination and harmony among the sense organs of vision, audition and speech which can be ultimately traced to the mind. By stressing and laying great emphasis on internal and external harmony and orderliness in thought, word and deed, Gandhiji added a new dimension to his doctrine of truth and non-violence.

Additional Points

For additional points, kindly refer to the lessons 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8 of paper III.

Incidents in the Life of Gandhi

Let us see some concrete incidents in the life of Gandhi, as an evidence for his harmony in thought, word and deed.

Most of us are aware of the *Harischandra Purana* and realize the significant sacrifices of Harischandra to keep up his vow to speak only the truth. But we are not inclined to act on it. But young Gandhi, after witnessing the Harischandra play, thought in a different way, 'It haunted me and I must have enacted Harischandra to myself times without number. Why should not all be truthful like Harischandra? Was the question I asked myself day and night. To follow truth and to go through all the ordeals that Harischandra went through was the one ideal that inspired me. Gandhiji kept up this 'vow' throughout his life.

Gandhi have a vow to his mother that he would not touch liquor, meat and woman in England and he kept up this in London during 1888 to 1891.

His *An Autobiography* is a rich and glorious testimony of his experiments with truth. The readers are advised to list a few incidents either from his Autobiography or standard biographies and memories establishing the excellent harmony between thought, word and action in the life of Gandhi which is something unique.

Gandhiji's Words

I am but a seeker after Truth. I claim to have found the way to it. I claim to be making a ceaseless effort to find it. But I admit that I have not yet found it. To find Truth completely is to realize oneself and one's destiny, i.e., to become perfect. I am painfully conscious of my imperfections, and therein lies all the strength I possess, because it is a rare thing for a man to know his own limitations.

If I was a perfect man, I own I should not feel the miseries of my neighbours as I do. As perfect man, I should take note of them, prescribe a remedy and compel adoption by the force of unchallengeable Truth in me. But as yet I only see as through a glass darkly and therefore have to carry conviction by slow and laborious processes and then too not always with success. That being so, I would be less than human if with all my knowledge of avoidable misery pervading the land and of the sight of mere skeletons under the very shadow of the Lord of the Universe, I did not feel with and for all the suffering but dumb millions of INDIA.

Young India, 17-11-21

I am but a poor struggling soul yearning to be wholly good, wholly truthful and wholly non-violent in thought, word and deed. But ever failing to reach the ideal which I know to be true. It is a painful climb, but the pain of it is a positive pleasure to me. Each step upward makes me feel stronger and fit for the next.

Young India, 9-4-25

I know the path. It is strait and narrow. It is like the edge of a sword. I rejoice to walk on it, I weep when I slip. God's word is : 'He who strives never perishes'. I have implicit faith in that promise. Though therefore, from my weakness I fail a thousand times, I will not lose faith but hope that I shall see the Light when the flesh has been brought under perfect subjection as some day it must.

Young India, 17-6-'26

I have not seen Him, neither have I known Him. I have made the world's faith in God my own and as my faith is ineffaceable, I regard that faith as amounting to experience. However, as it may be said that to describe faith as experience is to tamper with truth, it may perhaps be more correct to say that I have no word for characterizing my belief in God.

An Autobiography, 1948, p.431.

I claim to be a votary of truth from my childhood, it was the most natural thing to me. My prayerful search gave me the revealing maxim *Truth is God*, instead of the usual one *God is Truth*. That maxim enables me to see God, face to face at it were. I feel Him pervade every fibre of my being.

Harijan, 9-8-'45

Ahimsa is my God, and Truth is my God. When I look for Ahimsa, Truth says, 'Find it out through me'.

Young India, 4-6-'25

To see the universal and all-pervading spirit of Truth face to face one must be able to love the meanest of creation as oneself. And a man who aspires after that cannot afford to keep out of any field of life. That is why my devotion to Truth has drawn me into the field of politics; and I can say without the slightest hesitation, and yet in all humility, that those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means.

An Autobiography, 1948, p.615.

I am endeavouring to see God through service of humanity, for I know that God is neither in heaven, nor down below, but in every one.

An. Autobiography, 1948, p.615

I have no desire for the perishable kingdom of earth. I am striving for the kingdom of Heaven which is *Moksha*. To attain my end it is not necessary for me to seek the shelter of a cave I carry one about me, if I would but know it. A cave-dweller can build castles in the air whereas a dweller in a place like Janak has no castles to build. The cave dweller who hovers round the world on the wings of thought has no peace. A Janak, though living in the midst of 'pomp and circumstance' may have peace that passeth understanding. For me, the road to salvation lies through incessant toil in the service of my country and there through of humanity. I want to identify myself with everything that lives.

Young India, 3-4-'24

I want to realize brotherhood or identity not merely with being called human, but I want to realize identity with all life, even with such things as crawl upon earth. I want, if I don't give you a shock to realize identity with even the crawling things upon earth, because we claim descent from the same God, and that being so, all life in whatever form it appears must be essentially one.

Young India, 4-4-'29

There is no such thing as 'Gandhism' and I do not want to leave any seer after me. I do not claim to have originated any new principle or doctrine. I have simply tried in my own way to apply the eternal truths to our daily life and problems. Truth and non-violence are as old as the hills. All I have done is to try experiments in both on as vast a scale as I could do. In doing so, I have sometimes erred and learnt by my errors. Life and its problems have thus become to me so many experiments in the practice of truth and non-violence.

Harijan, 28-3-'3

My faith in truth and non-violence is ever-growing, and as I am ever trying to follow them in my life. I too am growing every moment I see new implications about them. I see them in a newer light everyday and read in them a newer meaning.

Harijan 2-3-'4

Test Yourself

Reflect on whether there is harmony in your life between word, thought, action and motivation.

Buddha gave highest priority to consistency at all levels. His Eight fold path is as follows.

- 1) Right Understanding
- 2) Right Determination
- 3) Right Speech
- 4) Right Action

- 5) Right Livelihood
- 6) Right Effort
- 7) Right Mindfulness
- 8) Right Concentration

Peace Pilgrim talks about the purification of body, thought, desire and motive. She also speaks about relinquishment of the feeling of separateness, self, will, attachment and negative feeling.

Mahatma Gandhi strived to eliminate ambivalence. But he was aware of the continuing march towards greater truth and consequent changes in all aspects of life. This implies the resultant contradictions and inconsistencies due to growth which are only legitimate and inevitable. But it should not be "going down".

The spiritual and holistic growth contains "peak experiences" and onward movement inspite of earlier "going down often". The spiritual growth chart of peace pilgrim (which she herself made) may help to understand Gandhi's life as well. There are many similarities but Gandhi seemed to begin with a "peak".

Means and Ends

The means-end problem is one of the largest and crucial problems in philosophy as difficult as the conception of part and whole. The problem of means and ends arises only at a comparatively developed stage of experience. When experience first came to be consciously studied, men attached importance to ends. Soon it was realized that there is many a slip between the end and the means and therefore it was soon concentrated on the means as well. The pendulum has been swinging from one side to the other at different times and this would even continue to swing as long as the finite mind gropes in darkness failing to realize the supreme end, the spiritual realization.

The problem of means and end is of supreme importance in Indian philosophy. The schools of Indian thought are deeply concerned with the elevation of man and the method of achieving it. It is in this respect that Indian philosophy is distinct from modern western philosophy in general namely, that it is value-oriented. Philosophy takes its use in the practical needs of man. Man can not live without a metaphysics. It is the philosophy of life that makes him what he is in India, Philosophy has always had a practical aim, namely to find out the means where by man can attain unmixed and unalloyed happiness. The aim of various systems of philosophy is explicitly stated to be this.

Every individual is governed in all his actions by certain motives. He always pursues one of other values of life. The only thing is that what one considers as his good may not be found to be so by another. In all techniques, hygiene, jurisprudence, politics, pedagogy, etc., the ends are more or less fixed, are presupposed; there is only the important question as to the ways and means. Ethical discipline directs one to point out the ends themselves for sake of which all means are there, the highest, the absolute ends, which cannot be regarded as means to anything else. It is the highest claim which confronts him.

Ethical man is in everything the opposite of the precipitant and apathetic man. He is the observer of values, he is sapiens in the original sense of the word, 'taster'. He is who, has a faculty for the fullness of life's values. In fact evolution is the prerogative of man. It is just possible that other creatures also seek ends. But it is given to man alone to judge the worth of ends as well as means, and choose the best among them. It is man alone who quests after the eternal and eventually succeeds in gaining it.

Spiritual perfection of the individual is the ultimate end of society. It cannot be considered as a means to any other end. But there may be many other goods such as love, money, power, fame, benevolence, etc. which ordinary persons would always try to pursue. Every individual cannot be expected to be conscious of the highest end. For such people it is necessary to devise a graded hierarchy of ends which while satisfying their general needs will yet form as an instrument for the highest end. In this sense all the activities of a society may be interpreted as the expressions of values that its members respect. Sankara lays it down that an ideal society must help him in this. By trying to perfect himself, every individual will be raising the world to perfection. The ideal may also be said to be common, because all individuals want to realize the same ideal. Individuals have to separately try to reach the ideal, but the contents of the ideal are the same. This makes it a common ideal. The pursuit of this ideal brings to the individuals together makes them live together, and induce them to help each other in their realization.

Attachment to the body and the things that the body wants is the root cause of all evils. Men identify themselves with bodies and fight with each other. But what seems to separate man from man does not really constitute his essence. As bodies, as senses, as prana, as we are different. But we are none of these either separately or in combinations. We are pure spiritual beings. Spirit, *cit*, is one and identical and constitutes one's natural. It is not limited by time, space and causation. It is Truth consciousness and Bliss (*sat, cit, ananda*). The realization of this unity of spiritual existence would remove all sense of separateness. Every individual's supreme effort will have to be directed towards the realization, of the Real which is *sat-cit ananda*. This ideal, therefore, is common. The pursuit of this would mean happiness to all. The structure of society must be planned in such a way that the realization of both the aims become possible and easy. The subsidiary ends will be the immediate ends of actions for the majority of people. But it is possible to make the ultimate end the basis of regulatory norms which would guide and control action in the pursuit of immediate ends.

All social institutions must be considered as instrumental. By their nature, all human relations and behaviour are values. Values play an important role in the integration and fulfilment of man's basic impulses and desires in a stable and consistent manner appropriate for his social being. They are generic experiences in social action made up of both individual and social responses and attitudes. They build up societies integrate social relations mould the ideal dimensions of personality and the range and depths of culture. A society, if it is to survive, must regularly fulfill the supreme value of personality. The selection of means

and ends is significantly important in order that the equilibrium of society is not disturbed and that the inter relationship of means and ends is justifiable and self-consistent.

This leads us to the main problem at issue. The two opposite views are; (1) Does the end justify means? (2) Does the means justify the end? When we say that the end justifies the means one should understand; by 'means' not something which is a part of a whole process whose culmination is called the end, but just a cause or condition which is chosen by a moral agent to bring a certain effect; and which therefore acquires a peculiar value of its own-the value that any contributor object would acquire. The means is an instrumental cause, and so there is a certain distance between the means and the end which is generally not to be found between an efficient cause and its effect. It does not mean that the means is thus always an instrumental cause. Means and ends may altogether be separate from each other. If, on the contrary, means and ends formed different stages of one process only the whole process would stand self-justified or self-condemned, and we should not possibly talk of the end justifying the means. Intensive study is the means of acquiring knowledge but only in the sense that it is itself part of the whole process which culminates in full knowledge. The whole process is one and integral and it is difficult to say here which is means and which exactly is end, since at every stage knowledge is being acquired. The case is similar when we say that eating is the means of satisfying hunger; moral practice and discipline are the means of moral perfection; deep meditation is a means of spiritual self realization, etc. in all such cases, the whole process must be regarded as having value and it would be difficult to say what amount of value belongs to the end, what amount to the means merely. The dictum that the end justifies the means falls to the ground, if applied to the above illustrations.

The supporter of the above dictum observe that means must be taken as an instrumental cause of a possible effect which is regarded as an end. For example, the interest of health justifies, the surgeon's knife. The interests of urgent social reforms may sometimes justify the application of drastic legal remedies to cure chronic social maladies, such as removing unbearable suffering may sometimes; justify even putting an end to the life of the sufferer, as Gandhi once put an end to the life of a calf, suffering from an incurable disease. However what Gandhi said for a calf cannot we automatically generalised for humans. And in moral life generally it may become necessary to perform surgical operations in the interests of a higher moral development. In such cases, the means are adopted out of pure motives. Naturally, the end is justified.

The end of state action arises for the promotion of the best life development of reason and character. The means at its disposal are automatic action and compulsion appealing only to their lower motives, of threats of punishment and hopes of reward. Means and ends are not in '*pari materia*' and yet a certain amount of the material means has the value of liberating a great amount of moral value and in this sense both values are commensurable or in the old terminology the end justifies the means if we generalize the basis of such commensurability and, say as the communists. Fascists and practical politicians argue that any means would be justified so long as the end is good, that violence, bloodshed,

treachery, falsehood, deceit, hypocrisy, promise breaking, plunder, invasion, murder, treason, etc., are all permissible in the interests of a larger good, say the consolidation and expansion of state territory, or that bribery, unfaithfulness, disloyalty, etc., on the part of jail keepers could be justified if they could thereby achieve some greater hedonistic good. But the proposition that the end justifies the means sounds rather absurd. For we are saying here that to obtain a great material good, a small moral value may be sacrificed. We are saying that to do a great right we may do a little wrong. Gandhiji would never subscribe to this view of immoral action which is dangerous in practice and unsound in theory.

In Gandhian philosophy, the distinction between ends and means fades away and the two are considered as constituting a continuous process, an organic whole. Gandhiji's emphasis on means is partly due to the fact that man can only strive, he cannot command result. In his own words, 'means are after all everything'. As the means so the end. There is no wall of separation between means and end. Indeed the creator has given us control over means none over the end. Realization of the goal is in exact proportion to that of the means. This is a proposition that admits of no exception. According to him the means may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree, and there is the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree. The Gita doctrine of '*Niskama Karma*' also teaches us that a good deed produces only a good result. Hence Gandhiji believes that if we take care of the means, the end will take care of itself, *Niskama Karma Yoga* stresses the motivation of action. It points out that the motive of one's action should not be the transitory satisfaction of sensual desire but rather the highest motive of self-realization.

Gandhi's ideal seems to be the only right view of the relation between the end and the means. Good means alone can lead us to everlasting peace and progress. Past history teaches us that violence engenders violence, revenge leads to counter-revenge and a war sows the seeds of further wars. A careful enquiry will convince one of the truth that means should be compatible with the end concerned. Both should be homogeneous so as to assure that the extreme of means is itself the end. In fact that end cannot be something to be attained all at once in a distant future. The end progressively realizes itself through the means, and then at each step the means itself is turned into the end. To Gandhi, means and ends are convertible terms. The *Upanishads* have often identified the way that leads to the realization of Brahman with the realization self. The end is to achieve the peaceful and blissful state of self-realization in end through individual and social strivings. One cannot hope to reach a moral destination by means of immoral means. It is a universal dictum that hate begets hate and violence is reinforced by violence. There can be no valid contention against the universal truth of what the Buddha said; "Anger and evil should be won by love, One should suffer and peacefully resist through love instead of answering a blow with a blow". So did Jesus ask his disciples to love even their enemies.

If we believe in the ultimate goal and in the fundamental unity of life, good ends will mean a state of the greatest possible unification. This can be obviously achieved by intrinsically unifying good means and not by separative bad means.

It is of relevance to trace briefly the manner in which Western political thought has neated the means-ends relationship. Joan V. Bondurant makes a brilliant analysis of the problem of ends and means. She has suggested that traditional political theories have failed to deal adequately with the problems of means. Some have admitted defeat by uneasily relying upon techniques of violence as the only alternative in the last resort. Others have made vacant gestures in the direction of a new approach, but have thus collapsed of their own weight. Still other have frankly embraced the means of violence approaching an ends means entangle. Convertibility based upon violence have gone down in the ashes of total Truth destruction. Tradition political thought assuming a separation of ends and means has proceeded to eclipse means by emphasizing concern for ends, where political theory has evidenced an awareness of the unity of ends and means, the problem has tended to be stated in terms of machinery or of form and device. There is truth in the above statements of Bondurant.

We find the Marxist politico philosophical thought concerns itself with the problem of means. But it obscures a satisfactory solution by centring open a dialectic depended upon a determinist philosophy of history. For Marxist thought violence has sufficed for a means in the hands of individuals. The Marxist ideal of the classless society is an end - in - itself.

The authoritarian idealistic school headed by Hegel, Kant, and Fichte embodies an historical, evolutionary doctrine which transforms the will into an aspect of pure abstract intelligence. The metaphysical theory of Hegel has even less need than conservatism to concern itself with the problems of means for man to achieve his political ends. For the state, is an end itself. It is Mind realizing itself through history. Hegel is not concerned with a technique of action whereby specific ends could be achieved. The refusal to deal with man determined ends, together with the failure to understand the functions and importance of a man controlled technique for achieving ends understood in terms of man's needs, have signalled the terrible defeat, of an impressive political philosophy.

On thorough examination of the dichotomy of ends and means, it was Spengler, who said that what man needs above is not only a noble end but also constructive and creative means. John Dewey has made a significant contribution to this problem. He argues that only recognition in both theory and practice that ends to be attained one of the nature of hypotheses and the hypotheses have to be formed and tested in strict correlativity with existential conditions as means, can alter current habits of dealing with social ideas. Whereas Dewey has called attention to the need for considering means and ends as "two ways of regarding the same actuality" and has insisted that ends be developed with the fullest considerations of existential circumstances he has stopped short of that step which could lead to a yet more rewarding approach to a philosophy of action.

Ends and Means as Convertible Terms

Like Lord Buddha Gandhiji was an ethical absolutist and he refused to make any compromise with what he regarded as essential and fundamental principles. The principle of the sacrosanct character of human conscience and its

incorporation in the structure of society and politics necessarily implies purification of means and ends. In a spiritually organic universe, good ends cannot be achieved by evil methods. So, as a moral prophet, Gandhiji stressed nobility and purity of methods for the realization of the agreed ends. The great Greek philosopher, Plato also accepted an immanent spiritual theology in the world-process. But, even Plato did not lay so much emphasis on the purity of means, as Gandhiji did. Both in South Africa and in India, in his Satyagraha movements, Gandhiji stressed the purity of means. In his own words, "For me, it is enough to know the means. Means and ends are convertible terms in my philosophy of life". It is very interesting and highly thought - provoking and creative in nature in the field of moral activities that Gandhiji not only prescribed purity of means but also purity of inner motives and intentions. It is no wonder, then, Gandhiji as a leader of men and moral actions, symbolized the synthesis or the union of goodness and greatness and he richly deserves the title, the Great Mahatma or Great Soul.

Gandhiji's emphasis on means is partly due to the fact that man can only strive and he cannot command results in each and every type of activity. In his own words, "Means are after all everything". As the means, so the end - There is no wall of separation between means and ends Realization of the goal is in exact proportion to that as the means. This is proposition that admits of no exception". The Gita doctrine of *Nishkama Karma* or action without attachment also teaches us that only a good deed produces good results. Hence Gandhi firmly believed that if a person took special care of the means, the end would take care of itself. The essence of Gandhian thought and morality can be traced to the purity of ends and means. Nehru in his speech, at the time of receiving the Degree of "Doctor of Laws" conferred on him by the Columbia University on 17-10-1949, observed as follows, "I think there is always a close and intimate relationship between the end, we aim at and the means adopted to attain it. Even if the end is right, if the means are wrong that will vitiate the end or divert it into a wrong direction. Means and ends are thus intimately and inextricably connected and cannot be separated Mahatma Gandhi always laid stress on moral values and warned us never to subordinate means to ends". In the final analysis, in Gandhian philosophy, the distinctions between end and means disappear and fade away and the two are considered constituting a continuous process and an organic whole. One cannot hope to reach moral destination by immoral means. If we believe in the ultimate goal and in the fundamental unity of life, good ends will mean in the words of Aldous Huxley, 'a state of great possible unification', and this can be obviously achieved by intrinsically unifying good means. The end progressively realizes itself through the means and so at each step the means itself is turned in to the end and so for Gandhiji, the end and the means are convertible terms.

All of us today, constantly on the threshold of violence in this rapidly changing present-day world. The restraint of violence by mutual tolerance and forbearance is an essential condition for social life in all circumstances. In this atomic age this is also one of the necessary conditions for our survival and the present generation has a lesson to learn from the Indian tradition pre-eminently represented by Gandhi. Gandhi had the practical ability to translate an Utopian-looking vision of satyagraha into an immense practical political achievement. The

challenge of Gandhian sathyagraha centres upon the necessity of reconciling ends and means through a philosophy of action. Throughout Gandhi's life the idea of nobility of means remained his steadfast conviction. As far as India is concerned, the stress is placed on the means adopted and the method employed during the independence movement were highly influential factors in moulding India into her present form.

Gandhi was clear in his views about the social and political ends which he was pursuing. Ideals are ends that regarded as being worthy of pursuit, ends that call forth activity which would conserve values. Gandhi, like any humanists of our age, Aldous Huxley and Gilbert Murray has felt that an end which either demands or justifies unworthy means cannot be good. Gandhi's conception of the relation between ends and means is very closely linked with, the moral principles expounded by him amidst conflict in the most equivocal phenomenon of human life. Gandhiji attempted to show that satyagraha is the method of transforming the nature of conflict so that it is made creative in situations, where it has remained wholly destructive.

It has been necessary to dwell at considerable length on the problem of means-end relation from the general stand-point of ethical and political theorists in the West. Against this background, Gandhi's conception of Truth and Nonviolence which chalks out a way of life and principle of ethics and morality to be followed by individuals and masses of men and women becomes meaningful.

The highest purpose of all human action is the realization of absolute Truth. Gandhi distinguishes between relative truth as perceived by finite individuals in relation to a particular set of ideas and circumstances and Truth as the summum bonum-Absolute Truth which he identifies with God. The supreme, absolute, ever present spirit of God is both the starting point and the final goal of Gandhian Thought. To Gandhi, Truth is the end and nonviolence the means. Gandhi's main emphasis is on the integral approach to truth which pervades life itself. It is the very nature and the law of being and becoming which Gandhi wants to discover. The object of discovering the law is to live accordingly and not to only to achieve the satisfaction of intellectual curiosity. Truth is something to be realized in the inner being of one's own self and therefore it is to be experienced by one's whole being.

The basis of Sarvodaya being spiritual the means for achieving Sarvodaya social order is also spiritual. A philosophy such as this implies a living faith in the One that pervades all. This requires self discipline and training and development of soul force. The moral law for Gandhi is the eternal and immutable law of life which rules the whole universe and is ingrained in the human heart to the searching quest of truth in its varied aspects in his life and in trying to seek self-realization he made his life into 'numerous experiments with truth'. To find Truth completely is to realize oneself and one's destiny, that is to be perfect. Gandhi was concerned with the means whereby the realization of absolute Truth might be advanced. To Gandhi the means and ends are convertible terms; The extreme of means is itself the end. Hence according to Gandhi, God as Truth is also God as Love. To Gandhi Truth is the end and nonviolence the means. The

means, may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree.

People say 'means are after all means'. But Gandhi would say 'means are after all everything'. As the means so the end. There is no wall of separation between means and end. Indeed the creator, has given us control over means, none over the end. Realization of the goal is in exact proportion to that of the means. This is a proposition that admits of no exception. Impure means result in an impure end. One cannot reach truth by untruthfulness. Truth conduct alone can reach Truth. Non-violence is embedded in Truth and vice versa. *Ahimsa* is the means. Truth is the end. Means to be means must always be within our reach, and so *ahimsa* is our supreme duty. If we take care of the means, we are bound to reach the end sooner or later.

Gandhian Ethics and Benthamite Utilitarianism:

Gandhi considered the essential moral values as permanently obligatory on all human beings, without any reference to the relative distinction of time and space. As a metaphysical idealist and an ethical absolutist, Gandhiji, pleaded for the good of all and for the welfare of all. Further Gandhiji regarded the Benthamite formula of the greatest good of the greatest number as imperfect and inadequate. He once wrote as follows. The fact is that a votary of *Ahimsa* cannot subscribe to the utilitarian formula. He will strive for the greatest good of all and die in the attempt to realize the ideal. He will, therefore be willing to die so that the others may live. He will serve himself with the rest by himself dying. The greatest good of all inevitably includes the good of the greatest number and therefore he and the utilitarian will converge at many points in their career. But, there does come a time, when they must part company and even work in opposite directions. The utilitarian, to be logical, will never sacrifice himself. But the Gandhian will ever sacrifice himself.

Gandhiji was a staunch believer in the purification of human motivation. According to Gandhiji not only the means must be good, but the motive prompting an act has to be good, pure and noble. Even though the formal structure of the actions of two individuals may be the same, the differences many lie in their motivations for Gandhiji and so he differed from the philosophical radicals and utilitarians, like John Stuart Mill, in laying great emphasis on the purification of human motivations. Let us illustrate this point by an interesting example. A rich merchant helps an ordinary beggar by giving alms. On a particular day, many beggars seek his alms and the last beggar teases him and refuses to move on, when he is very busy with his trade. In great anger and in order to get rid of him, he throws a silver coin on his face and the same hits his forehead and bleeding starts. The poor beggar, unmindful of his bleeding, is very happy, since he got on that day a silver coin and he purchases bread and butter. However, the action of the merchant, with special reference to his motivation is not good, though the results for the beggar are good and his hunger is satisfied. So, in the opinion of Gandhiji to pursue a correct course of action, one must have perfect control over one's will and thought and the motive also must be good. In conclusion the

stress on fundamental motivational regeneration differentiates Sarvodaya movements from that of Benthamite utilitarianism and there in lies the superiority and greatness of the ethical approach and the means employed in Sarvodaya movements.

MEANS AND ENDS

Selections from Mahatma Gandhi

"For me, it is enough to know means. Means and end are convertible terms in my philosophy of life".

Young India, 26-12-'24, p.424.

"They say 'means are after all means'. I would say means are after all everything. As the means so the end... There is no wall of separation between means and ends. Indeed, the Creator has given us control (and that too very limited) over means, none over the end. Realization of the goal is in exact proportion to that of the means. This is a proposition that admits of no exception".

Young India, 17-7-'24, p.236

Right conduct is not like Euclid's right line. It is like a beautiful tree, not one of whose millions of leaves is like any other. Though, therefore they are from one seed and belong to the same tree, there is none of the uniformity of a geometrical figure about any part of a tree. And yet we know that the seed, the branches and the leaves are one and the same. We know, too, that no geometrical figure can bear comparison with a full blossomed tree in point of beauty and grandeur".

Young India, 14-8-'24, p.267

"Imagine a rectangular frame without a slate. The slightest rough handling of the frame would turn the right angles into acute and obtuse angles and if the frame was again rightly handled at one corner the three would be automatically turned into right angle".

Harijan, 30-11-'47, p.447

"Impure means result in an impure end.... one cannot reach Truth by untruthfulness. Truthful conduct alone can reach Truth. Are not Nonviolence and Truth twins? The answer is an emphatic 'No'. Non-violence is embedded in Truth and vice versa. Hence has it been said that they are faces of the same coin. Either is inseparable from the other. Read the coin either way. The spelling or words will be different. The value is the same. This blessed state is unattainable without perfect purity. Harbour impurity of mind of body and you have untruth and violence in you".

Harijan, 13-1-'47, p.232

"To work thou has the right, 'never to the fruit thereof is one of the golden precepts of the Gita".

Harijan, 18-8-'40, p.254

"We are merely the instruments of the Almighty Will and are therefore often ignorant or what helps us forward and what acts as an impediment. We must thus rest satisfied with a knowledge only of the means, and if these are pure, we can fearlessly leave the end to take care of itself".

Satyagraha in South Africa 1950, p.318

"The clearest possible definition of the goal and its appreciation would fail to take us there, if we do not know and utilize the means of achieving it. I have, therefore, concerned myself principally with the conservation of the means and their progressive use. I know if we can take care of them, attainment of the goal is assured. I feel too that our progress towards the goal will be in exact proportion to the purity of our means.

"This method may appear to be long, perhaps too long, but I am convinced that it is the shortest".

Selections from Gandhi, pp 36-37

"However much I may sympathise and admire worthy motives, I am an uncompromising opponent of violent methods even to serve the noblest of cause.... Experience convinces me that permanent good can never be the outcome of untruth and violence. Even if my belief is a fond delusion, it will be admitted that it is a fascinating delusion".

Young India 11-12-'24, p. 406

"I have often said that if one takes care of the means, the end will take care of itself. Nonviolence is the means, the end for every nation is complete independence".

Harijan, 11-2-39, p. 18.

"By detachment I mean that you must not worry whether the desired result follows from your action or not so long as your motive is pure, your means correct. Really it means that things will come right in the end if you take care of the means and leave the rest to Him".

Harijan, 7-4-'47 p. 490

"Success or failure is not in our hands. It is enough we do our part well.... Ours is but to strive. In the end, it will be as He wishes."

Harijan, 12-1-'47 p.490

"The means may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree; and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree... I am not likely to obtain the result flowing from the worship of God by laying myself prostrate before satan. If therefore any one were to say: 'I may worship God; it does not matter that I do so by means of satan', it would be set down as ignorant folly. We reap exactly as we sow.

"If I want to deprive you of your watch, I shall certainly have to fight for it; If I want to buy your watch, I shall have to pay you for it; and if I want, gift, I shall have to plead for it; and, according to the means I employ, the watch is

stolen property, my own property or a donation. Thus we see three different results from three different means. Will you still say that means do not matter?

"Let us proceed a little further. That well-armed man has stolen your property: you have harboured the thought of his act; you are filled with anger; you argue that you want to punish that rogue, not for your own sake, but for the good of your neighbours; you have collected a number of armed men; you want to take his house by assault; he is duly informed of it, he runs away: he too is incensed. He collects his brother robbers and sends you a defiant message that he will commit robbery in broad daylight. You are strong, you do not fear him you are prepared to receive him. Meanwhile, the robber pesters your neighbours. They complain before you. You reply that you are doing all for their sake, you do not mind that your own goods have been stolen. Your neighbours reply that the robbers never pestered them before and that he commenced his depredations only after you declared hostilities against him, You are between Scylla and Charybdis. You are full of pity for the poor men. What they say is true what are you to do? You will be disgraced if you now leave the robber alone. You, therefore, tell the poor men: "Never mind. Come my wealth if yours I will give you arms. I will give you arms. I will teach you how to use them; you should belabour the rogue; don't leave him alone. And so the battle grows; the robbers increase in numbers; your neighbours deliberately put themselves to inconvenience, Thus the result of wanting to take revenge upon the robber is that you have disturbed your own peace: you are in perpetual fear of being robbed and assaulted, your courage has given place to cowardice. If you will patiently examine the argument, you will see that I have not overdrawn the picture. Thus is one of the means.

"Now let us examine the other. You set this armed robber down as an ignorant brother, you intend to reason with him at a suitable opportunity: you argue that he is after all, a fellow man; you do not know what prompted him to steal. You, therefore, decide, that when you can, you will destroy the man's motive for stealing. Whilst you are thus reasoning with yourself, the man comes again to steal. Instead of being angry with him you take pity on him. You think that this stealing habit must be a disease with him. Henceforth, you, therefore, keep your things in a manner most accessible to him. The robber comes again and is confused as all this is new to him; nevertheless, he takes away your things. But his mind is agitated. He inquires about you in the village, he comes to learn about your broad and loving heart; he repents, he begs your pardon, returns you your things, and leaves off the stealing habit. He becomes your servant, and you find for him honourable employment. This is the second method.

Thus you see, different means have brought about totally different results. I do not wish to deduce from this that robbers will act in the above manner or that all will have the same pity and love like you, but I only wish to show that fair means alone can produce fair results, and that, at least in the majority of cases, if not indeed in all, the force of arms. There is harm in the exercise of brute force, never in that of pity".

(Hind Swaraj)

Exercise

1. Give incidents from the life of Gandhi to establish the fact that "means and ends are inter-convertibles" to him.
2. "What is gained by the sword is lost by the sword". Give three examples from history in support of this
3. How did Gandhi realize the significance of right means in his early life.
4. Reflect the means you employ in your life. Suggest practical ways to improve the situation.

For Further Reading

Joan V. Bondurant	:	<i>Conquest of Violence</i> , pp.32 to 35
Ramjee Singh	:	<i>The Relevance of Gandhian Thought</i> , pp.38 to 50.
HJN Horsbury	:	<i>Nonviolence and Aggression</i> , pp.11 to 53
Shriman Narayan	:	<i>Indian Needs Gandhi</i> , pp.64-67
Raghavan Iyer	:	<i>The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi</i> , pp.359-371
Gene Sharp	:	<i>Gandhi as a Political Strategist</i> , pp.289-291
R.S. Narayan	:	<i>Gandhi's Contribution to Political Thought</i> , pp.33-36.

The Individual Life Diet, Clothing, etc.,

We have already seen that there is a remarkable harmony pervading through the thoughts, words and deeds of Mahatma Gandhi. In this lesson we shall see how his individual life bears eloquent testimony to his harmony and ethical living.

Some teachers used to say, "Listen to me but do not watch my personal life". Ramalinga Vallalar, a great social reformer, mystic and visionary of XIXth Century of Tamilnadu stood for total vegetarianism. But one of his leading exponents used to take a heavy non-vegetarian meal before he could inspiringly address on Ramalinga Vallalar.

Let us look into the individual life of Mahatma Gandhi from two dimensions - his diet and dress. Reference will be made to the other aspects as well.

Gandhiji's Diet

Gandhi's parents were traditional vegetarians. The young Gandhi persuaded by his bad friend Sheikh Mehtab took to non-vegetarianism secretly. The reasons were that he should grow strong and the Indians should gain strength to oust the English.

"Behold the mighty Englishman
He rules the Indian, small,
Because being a meat eater
He is seven cubits tall"

But, he stopped this secret practice, since he could not be untruthful to his parents. But he decided to eat meat after their demise. He went to England in 1888 for studies after giving a definite vow to his mother that he won't touch meat in England. He kept it up under difficult conditions. It was in London he learnt that the vegetarian diet is far superior. He then became a convinced vegetarian. Throughout his life, even in hours of crisis like the medical advice, he remained a vegetarian.

Gandhi was doing various experiments in diet and it was an inconclusive experiment. He was convinced that the diet to a large extent shapes a man. He ate less. Vegetables and fruits were his major items. He arrived at a tentative result that milk induces sex but he said that more research is needed. He wanted people to continue his experiments on milk and should not conclude without further research. Here, let us quote two passages from eye-witness accounts.

Gandhiji's Diet (*by N.R. Malkani*)

I First met Gandhiji in February 1917 when I was a professor of Economics in the C.B.B. College, Muzaffarpur (Bihar). It is a story by itself of his impact on me which I cannot narrate here. Everything about him, his dress, his kit, his manner of travelling was unique. But one thing struck me as unusual. He was carrying with him a covered tin of groundnut paste which was called his 'butter' and when he sat down to eat he devoured a lot of plantains along with this ground nut butter. It appeared to me that he was a heavy eater having an unusual diet.

Later on when he settled down in his Sabarmati Ashram I came to know his daily menu which was also strange. Early in the morning he would take hot water in a tumbler with a table-spoon of honey and half a lemon. The hot water cleaned his stomach, the honey gave nutrition and the lemon toned up his system. This habit I learnt from him and I maintain it upto today. During his lunch the menu was simple but again unique. He took three or four light Gujarati Khakhris with cows butter. He was served hot goat's milk in a large shining bowl of Kansa and another bowl with steaming boiled leafy vegetable. He would pour the bowl of vegetable in the bowl of milk. The milk was without sugar and the vegetable without salt or spices. On a small teapoy in front of him there used to be two small Kacories one having some neem paste another having some garlic paste.

He would serve others with some neem paste to improve their digestions and serve the garlic paste to himself and others to help to bring down blood pressure. But he made up for this simple diet by having an ample supply of fruits which included of course, oranges, sometimes apples and even grapes. This brought variety, taste and flavour to his food. Gandhi was a lover of fruits and enjoyed eating them in good quantities. For other members of the Ashram like me, he offered one or two small cubes of palm gur and called it his 'Chocolate'.

There were times when he made experiments on diet and began by running into excess, but, soon observed proper restraint. A co-worker, of an ascetic temperament, Bhansale, had for years retired into the forest and had learnt the habit of eating sunbaked bread and raw leaves of neem. Gandhiji fell in with the fad to begin with, and at lunch time would have a whole bowl of neem leaves ground into paste and he would offer neighbours spoonfuls with a twinkle in his eye. I avoided sitting by his side and observed his hospitality to others with a smile. At another time he took to eating raw piaz because "it is the common food of the poor" and he wanted to eat like them. His whole kitchen was full of piaz and its odour and everybody's mouth was smelling of piaz. Gandhiji knew that and whenever any guest came to interview him, he would sit at a distance to avoid the smell of piaz disturbing him. But later, he took very moderate quantities both of neem and piaz.

One thing was peculiar : Not only he avoided taking sweets perfumed or aerated water but he took ordinary water in an extraordinary way. He considered even tap water not sufficiently "sanitary". Every morning Mirabehn boiled tap water, cooled it and then filled up 2 or 3 bottles ready for him during the day. When thirsty, took water directly from the bottles without the tumbler. When I was incharge of "Harijan Tour" in 1933 in the South and used to travel with him in the same motor car, I had to carry a miscellaneous and queer kit when starting. I had to carry a bundle of his fill a pillow, a bag of medicine and also a bottle of water. I am a fairly careful man, but somehow one day I forgot to carry the bottle. After about two hours journey and constant talking on the way, he felt thirsty and wanted a sip of water I searched, but there was no bottle and I told him so. He did not say a word but opened a small tibia which contained powdered sugar candy and cardamom. He took a pinch and put in his mouth to allay his thirst and his cough. There were wells and ponds of water on the way, but he would not touch a drop. From that day I saw to it that the precious bottle was always the first to be taken up and served when necessary.

The method of his taking food was equally strange. He always sat on the floor on a cushion and took his food not on a table and chair. The utensils in which food was served, were Indian, but these were rubbed and shone like gold or silver. I don't remember to have seen any cookery in his kitchen for his use. The only western article he used was a spoon, but made in his Indian way' of shining teak. He also copied the Western habit of using a napkin for holding the bowl of hot milk, but there was no paraphernalia of dishes and tumblers, knives, etc. One wooden spoon was all that he accepted but in the Indian manner. He also ate very slowly so, that every meal took at least half an hour and he was the last to rise as if he had eaten the most. In one place during the Harijan Tour the

programme was so absurdly made that our car arrived at about 3 p.m. and the next engagement at the next stop was at 4 p.m. Both of us looked thoroughly tired and dust-laden. He went to his bath and told me that I should go to my meals. He missed the meal rather than gulp it down in haste. He also took very moderate quantities of food excepting fruits. On tour, he carried his kitchen in a box. All his food materials were inside the box plus a pair of scales for measuring every item of his diet. He ate by measure at fixed time not by so-called appetite. In his food there was nothing like an "Appetiser" i.e. sugar or salt or spices. No attempt was made to serve the food in an attractive way. The only attraction was perfect cleanliness. He enjoyed his hot goat's milk with boiled vegetables, soaked in it as you and I enjoy a rich meal. To my mind, Gandhiji was the first man who gave us the idea not of food but of diet. i.e. how much food, how prepared, how served for purposes of health, not for pleasure. Pleasure as was a by-product of clean, nourishing, simply prepared diet.

Gandhiji was a multi-dimensional personality and he touched many aspects of life and wrote interesting articles on nature cure and healthy life. Nature-cure was one important method he admired, promoted and practised in his daily individual life. He was fully convinced and observed the way of living close to, nature and followed the good old proverb, 'Prevention is better than cure'. He did not believe in the use of medicines and did not permit the use of antibiotics for Kasturba, when she was seriously ill. He detested vivisection and strongly condemned animal experimentation. He apply the principles of ahimsa in its trust sense of all activities of life and in this sense, he was a great pioneer, since he was a first man in India to encourage what is known as "health food store and reform houses", where pure and healthy food were sold. It is highly remarkable that Gandhiji combined ideals with a practical way of putting them into practice. For example, he put his ideas of ahimsa into action and were only shoes made of "ahimsa leather" in the sense meaning leather made from the hides of animals that died naturally. He also encouraged ahimsa silk i.e. silk made from cocoons from which the silk-worm meths had not been killed, but had flown away.

Gandhiji's great and abiding faith in non-violence and strict vegetarianism made him vehemently criticise those, who promoted animal food in the name of health. In the same spirit he condemned animal experimentation and considered the same "as the bulkiest" of all the black crimes, that man is at present committing against God. Gandhiji's great interest and his loving and tender-hearted nature in promoting kindness to animals can be gathered from the following words, "Sacrifice of animals in the name of religion is a remnant of barbarism, It is meaningless to invoke in our daily prayers the blessings of God, the Compassionate, if we in turn do not practise elementary compassion towards our fellow creatures.... To my mind, the life of a lamb is no less precious than that of a human being. I should be unwilling to take life of a lamb for the sake of the human body. I hold that the more helpless a creature the more entitled it is to protection by man from the cruelty of man".

Diet Adjustments (*Kakasaheb Kalelkar*)

The whole of Bharat had come to know that Babu ate nothing but fruits. The Hindus include milk in their 'fruitarian' diet, but Babu opposed this most strongly. He not only denied that milk was 'fruitarian' but asserted that it was purely 'animal' food. It is the essence of blood, flesh marrow, etc. How, then, can it be considered 'fruitarian'? Milk, as diet may not involve violence, but it is certainly 'animal' food.

On one occasion, Babu had to go to Calcutta, and he stayed as a guest at Bhunendranath. The Bengalis, as every one knows, are famous for their hospitality. Babu's host gathered all the fruits that could be found, dried as well as fresh, and prepared every possible fruit dish that could be thought of. The feast was then spread before Babu. Babu was appalled. He protested: "Oh, what have you done? I love simplicity, and what an amount of trouble you have taken for my sake!" The thing so upset him that he immediately took a vow to eat every day food with only five natural ingredients.

This aroused keen discussion amongst us. Should lemons, oranges and mosambis be regarded as the same things, or as different things? Should sugarcandy and plain sugar be regarded as the same ingredient or not? Many such questions arose. Babu took a very keen interest in such discussions, and carried them right up to the hair - splitting stage with the untiring enthusiasm of a lawgiver.

After this we had to remember what he had eaten in the morning. When deciding what he should be given in the evening. Babu tried to make things as easy for us as possible, adjusting his diet to the exigencies of the moment. One of his rules was to finish his meal before sunset. To prevent his meal time from over lapping or clashing with his evening functions was a regular headache for every one concerned.

A few day's experience was sufficient to convince Babu that Bharat was not South Africa. Fruits were not so plentiful here. In South Africa you could gorge yourself with bananas, pineapples, apples oranges and other fruits of various kinds, with chilguza nuts thrown in for good measure. Babu was no mean trencherman, and when he found that he could not get a sufficiency of fruits in Bharat, he started taking roasted ground nuts along with him wherever he went, He drank coconut milk whenever he could get it. Finally, however he came to the conclusion that grain was an indispensable part of diet here so he readjusted his rule so far as to include rice, bread of Khichdi (rice and dal cooked together) in his menu. He soon discovered that he would have to take salt if he took grains, so he took salt also.

Gandhiji's Dress

Gandhiji, by any standard, was relatively a rich man from birth. He dressed well. In England he made all the efforts to become an English gentleman by wearing costly dress. But he gave it up soon, since he realized that it is not the

real way to become an English gentleman. In South Africa, he earned more than 4000 pounds per year as a Supreme Court Lawyer. He was quite conscious of his dress. He who refused to remove his turban at the District Magistrate Court took it off in the Supreme Court in South Africa. This is a change. He says, "Not that, if I had resisted the order of the Supreme Court, the resistance could not have been justified. But I wanted to reserve my strength for fighting bigger battles. I should not exhaust my skill as a fighter in insisting on retaining my turban. It was worthy of a better cause".

Gandhi realized the intensity of Indian poverty much more than any of our political leaders, He travelled far and wide and that too in a third class railway compartment. He walked with the ordinary people and stayed in their huts. The poverty of India moved him. He said,

"I know that many will find it difficult to replace their foreign cloth all at once. Millions are too poor to buy enough khadi to replace their discarded cloth. Let them be satisfied with a mere loin-cloth. In our climate, we hardly need to protect our bodies during the warm months of the year. Let there be no prudery about dress. India has never insisted on full covering of the body for the males as a test of culture. In order, therefore to set the example, I propose to discard atleast, up to the 31st of October, my *topi* and vest and to content myself with only a loin cloth and a chaddar whenever found necessary for the protection of the body. I *adopt* the change because I always hesitated to advise anything. I may not myself be prepared to follow, also because I am anxious by leading the way to make it easy for those, who cannot afford a change on discarding their foreign garments. I consider the renunciation to be also necessary for me as a sign of mourning and a bare head and bare body is such a sign in my part of the country. That we are in mourning more and more is being borne home to me, as the end of the year approaching and we are still without swaraj. I wish to state clearly that I do not expect the workers to renounce the use of vest and *topi*, unless they find it necessary to do so for their own work.

I am positive that every province and every district can, if there are enough workers, manufacture sufficient for its needs in one month. I advise complete suspension of every activity but swadeshi. I would even withdraw pickets from liquor shops, trusting the drinker to recognize the new spirit of purification. I would advise every non-co-operator to treat imprisonment as his ordinary lot in life and not think anything about it. If only we can go through the course of organising, manufacturing and collecting foreign cloth during the month of October, abstaining from meetings and excitements, we shall produce an atmosphere calm and peaceful enough to embark upon civil disobedience if it is then found necessary. But I have a settled conviction that if we exhibit the strength of character, the faculty for organising and the power of exemplary self - control, all of which are necessary, for full swadeshi, we shall attain swaraj".

Then Gandhi on his way to Madurai, looking at the poor Tamil peasants, decided (This incident took place on 22.09.1921) to identify with them fully. His cap and vest, be altogether discarded and he made a small Khadi bag to carry the things he used to put in the pocket of his vest. Then, he wore a piece of Khaddar

of a cubit width along his lions. He said that he had not become a *sanyasi* but he had only assumed the dress of a Tamil peasant. Until his end, he had the same dress. His identification with the poorest and the down trodden is not merely symbolic and ritualistic but real. Eventhough persons like Churchill laughed at him as a half-naked fakir, the masses find in him a true leader and their representative.

Here an interesting passage from Mirabehn, daughter of an English Admiral and a close associate of Gandhi is presented.

His Daily Life - (*Mirabehn*)

Of all the incidents in Bapu's long career to me, the richest and profoundest is the very recurring incident of his daily life. By this I do not mean the fact that he gets up at 4 or 3.30 in the morning, has prayers twice a day, eats unspiced food, and so on. Others also do this. It is the way he does everything. Whenever I am with Bapu I love to sit near him in silence for a while each day. Not when he is meeting people and carrying on discussions, but when he is alone. I know nothing more exquisitely gentle than the touch of Bapu's hand and I am never tired of watching him handling his writing work. Nothing is ruffled or damaged by his hands and nothing is wasted. I watch Bapu is absorbed in his thoughts. He softly takes a piece of paper to write a letter. Though small, it is yet bigger than he requires for his concise communications, so he carefully folds, it and then divides it into two. It is now about 3 inches broad and 5 inches long, and on this he writes all he needs to say. Again he looks for something. There is a little khadi case with stationery in. This he gently opens and extracts an envelope, addresses it, slips into it the written sheet and puts it into a little basket, kept for outgoing letters. The next communication is evidently to be still shorter, and he takes up a post card. It is not a fountain pen which he is using: some misfortune happened to his last one, since when he writes with an ordinary nib and holder. The ink - pot is one of Bapu's little parenges, and consists of tiny balm bottle fixed in a wooden stand which also carries pen and pencils. The little old tin screw top of the balm bottle. Bapu most delicately puts off and on every time he uses his "ink stand". The post card is now finished and slipped into the basket - Again he turns to the khadi stationary case. It is evidently an article that he is going to write, because he extracts a number of odd sheets, with writing on one side, but unused on the other. These are his "pusti" sheets carefully collected from the blank pages backs of letters and other communications which come in endless numbers by post. Bapu begins to write. The article seems to be of a serious nature, probably on some burning problem of the day, for a concentrated, even stern look appears on his countenance. Before the article is finished he begins to feel slept. The pen is laid in the stand, and the tiny tin top is placed on the balm bottle. The "pusti" sheets are carefully put on the side, and Bapu turns and lies down on his gaddi. He removes his glasses, places them by the side of his pillow, and in one or two minutes he is fast asleep, and breathing as peacefully as a little child.

I take a handkerchief and, sitting near his head, keep off the flies.

Such times are for me infinitely precious, infinitely sweet and filled with a profound teaching which could never be conveyed in words.

On one such occasion, when I was sitting near Bapu, he could not find his pencil, a little stamp which he had been cherishing. A whisper went round that Bapuji was hunting for his pencil. Members of the staff began to search about. It could not be found any where, so somebody brought him a new pencil. "No", said Bapu "I want my little stump". So somebody brought him another stump. "Do you expect me to be satisfied with somebody else's stump?" he said, 'Supposing you had lost your child, would you be satisfied if somebody brought you another child and said, 'take this one instead? After that a desperate hunt was made, and at last the little stump was found and triumphantly brought to Bapu who received it with a beaming smile.

There is only one real Gandhi Ashram in the world, and that is the few square feet containing Bapu's gadhi and little writing desk.

In his article, "Gandhi and Posterity", K. Santhanam tell us, "Gandhi's personality was compounded of many qualities which it is hard to find in the same person. He had almost absolute control over his thought, word and action. An atmosphere of high seriousness always surrounded him, but there was not the slightest trace of selfishness, pride or conceit. He was always gentle, pleasant, willing to joke and to laugh. But, he never wasted words, and spoke with the same brevity and carefulness with which he wrote. Above all, he was extremely strict and ascetic in his own personal life. But was extremely tolerant and even indulgent to others". At Calicut, Gandhiji's Gujarati host entertained the members of his party and others at a sumptuous dinner. While the members were eating. Gandhiji passed through the dinning hall and looking at the plates filled with various dishes, he laughed and remarked"; "So this is how you are going to fight the British". At the Belgaum Congress, Gandhiji made a moving a speech advocating spinning. Chitharanjan Das was strongly opposed to this proposal, which he considered impracticable and undesirable. But, at the end of the speech, when the motion was put to vote, it was supported by Das and his followers. When the meeting was over many crowded round Deshbandhu Das and asked him, why he had suddenly changed, Das replied, "Gandhiji appeared to be like a flame of fire and I felt that I should prefer to be consumed by that flame, rather than resist it". As early as 1908, Rev. J.J. Doke declared, "Gandhiji is one of those outstanding characters with whom to talk is a liberal education, whom to know is to love". Gandhiji was a deeply religious man and he started his day with early morning prayers and ended it with similar prayers. In conclusion, Gandhiji's profound belief in God was more intuitive and emotional than intellectual and metaphysical and his principles of good and upright life are harmonious blending and synthesis of one integrated whole of truth, nonviolence and love.

Rukmani Devi Arundale in her article, "Some Recollections", graphically brings out some salient qualities of Gandhiji in his daily life in the following words. "Here was true greatness I thought. There was no resentment, no pettiness and it came into my mind that this man was incapable of being unkind..... I was struck by one outstanding trait in his character. Gandhiji welcomed

everybody as a friend, whether he had known them for many years or whether he was meeting them for the first time... He even wrote to them by hand. How could he have done this, unless he felt that each individual was special and important? This is how he was able to bring out the dormant and latent qualities of those who came into contact with him.... We must renew in ourselves the feeling within and achieve a change of heart".

Another passage is given from Richard B. Gregg, an American friend and co-worker of Gandhi. He writes thus :

Great in Little Things - (*Richard B. Gregg*)

1. At Sabarmathi Ashram, after the common dining room was established, Bapu used to go to the kitchen early every morning after prayers to peel vegetables for the morning meal. In order to be with him, I went also and helped with the peeling. I do not remember what we talked about morning but I remember how much I was impressed by his doing this, and contrasting it with the actions of other national leaders generally considered great. Winston Churchill is versatile and paints landscapes and lays bricks as a hobby, making his own garden walls. But I have seen no reports of his using his hands for the benefit of his followers or guests or the common man. Stalin as a communist professes to work for the benefit of the masses, but I have not heard of his doing so with his own hands. Franklin Roosevelt talked persuasively about manual workers. But did no manual work himself. Bapuji identified himself with the workers in deed as well as in word. I could not help remembering the words of Jesus Christ. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted" and "Whosoever would be chief among you, let him be your servant".

2. One afternoon at Sabarmathi I went to Bapu's house to talk with him. As I went in I noticed that a tall Pathan was lying fast asleep on the verandah. Bapu remarked that the man had come a long distance to see him and after a talk had laid down there quite naturally and gone to sleep. He was no leader. He looked like an ordinary Pathan moneylender. Somehow the incident seemed to me typical of Bapu's hospitality and accessibility to every kind of person.

3. Just after the rains in 1925, I came down from a visit with S. E. Stokes in Kotgarh Simla Hills district, and went to Calcutta to be a while with Bapu. He was then raising money for hospital as a memorial to the recently deceased Bengali leader, C.R. Das. Mahadev Desai was with Bapu. The three of us slept in the same room together. Every morning at four we had prayers and worship of God, just as at the Ashram. That, too, seemed typical of Bapu always to put worship of God as the first duty of everyday no matter where he was or what the other business of the day might be.

4. Once at Sabarmathi Bapu had been sick with fever. It used up his strength a good bit. Ambalal Sarabhai and his gentle wife came over to beg of Bapu to go to their house in Ahmedabad to get rest and recover his strength. They came in the afternoon after 8 o'clock when Bapu was accustomed to receive visitors and I happened to be in the room chatting with him just before they came.

Though they pleaded with him he gently declined to leave the Ashram. I sat silent. Presently Ambalal cried to me: "Why don't you help us persuade him to take the rest he needs?" So I jointed them, urging in half-justing form. Many men would have been irritated at such increase of pressure but not so with Bapu. He maintained his position just as firmly and with complete gentleness and courtesy. This is a tiny incident but to me it was another revelation of character.

5. In the spring of 1930, while on a brief visit to India with my wife, we stayed at Sabharmati Ashram for several days during the week, before the start of the famous march to the sea to make salt illegally as the start to that campaign for liberty.

In a room in the guest house next to ours there was a young Englishman, a reporter from the Civil and Military Gazette, a strongly imperialist journal in Lahore. He had been sent to find out what was up, and thought he was, being bold and courageous, walking into the camp of the enemy. Bapu of course let him wander all over the Ashram and talk with anybody, and everybody, detailed a young man to attend to his wants, and granted him a long interview. At this display of courtesy, consideration and complete frankness the youngman's astonishment was so great as to be ludicrous.

During that same week, I watched and listened to Bapu talking to a group of Indian leaders who had come in for instructions and information. The speech was in Hindustani and too fast for me to understand. Bapu threw into his talk all his energy, and when it was over and I went up close to speak to him. I noted that he was trembling all over and wet with perspiration. Such was the completeness of his devotion to the cause and every single detail of it.

Towards the end of our stay, one evening just after prayers some messengers came running in great excitement. Vallabhai Patel had been arrested and the police had him in a car, taking him to Sabarmati gaol. yet such was their friendliness to Bapu that they stopped the car on the road in front of the Ashram to give all 'Ashram members a chance to see Sardarji and cry to him "Jai Jai". That seemed to me significant.

6. Here is a letter Bapu wrote to me from Sevagram on 20th January, 1945.

"My dear Gregg, your letter makes me glad and sad. Glad because of your faith and enthusiasm, and sad because of Radha's illness which you say is beyond recall. I am hoping that in this at least you will prove wrong. Nevertheless you and I can say: His will, not ours, be done. I believe also that what passes for misfortune is not always really so. Of these things, in spite of scientific advance we know so little. "When your revised book comes, of course, if I do not read it, Pyarelal or others will, and I shall know, love to you both". Bapu.

Gandhiji's simplicity was a conscious action. He identified with the suffering millions. He introduced a new way of life. He became a brahmachari while he was in South Africa. His life was an open book. He was punctual and

he made this an important point. Prayer, spinning meditation, and manual labour were inseparable parts of his, daily life. Gandhi was doing overwork and only during sickness, he used to take rest. He spent more than six and a half years in Jail. Even there he did these things and he could read books in prison. Giving interviews, replying letters, writing for the journals, addressing meetings and travel took away the time. For him, each one of his activity is important. Attending to a leper, watering the plants and discussing with Nehru or Jinnah are all equally important. He had the charisma to attract people from various parts of the world.

Points to Remember

Gandhi changed his diet and dress so as to be in tune with the poor and suffering and to support their life. But most of us through our diet and dress support the exploiting multinationals and live extravagantly alienating the poor and destroying nature. If a considerable percentage of people change their diet and dress, that can effect far reaching changes in the world in and around us.

Exercise

1. How Gandhi became a Vegetarian by conviction.
2. Explain the shift in Gandhiji's clothing pattern.
3. Give a table of the daily activities of Gandhi.

Application / Field Work

1. Examine the harmony or otherwise between your word, thoughts and action. How will you improve the harmony between them?
2. Describe the current level of your development and excellence. Work out a plan to move towards greater excellence and holistic development.
3. Observe your daily food habit for a few days. What are the changes that may be effected in your daily diet?
4. Examine your daily activities and outline a programme to upgrade them.
5. What kind of changes may be implemented in your dress pattern.
6. Encounter three persons who practice Gandhian (alternative) life-style in their day to day life.

**Family Life and Social Life : Sexual Morality -
Responsible Parenthood - Small Family (limiting the
family) - Care of the Children, Aged and Sick - Beyond
the Family System - Ashram Life - Face to Face Small
Communities - Pluratism and Diversities**

Some of these items have already been covered elsewhere in this course. Here we present additional points and give examples from the life of Mahatma Gandhi.

The latest scientific inventions and modern technological developments are slowly transforming the world into one family. To-day mankind is far better than those, who lived thousand years ago. So many superstitions have disappeared because of the scientific insights. With the help of technological developments mankind is moving towards the ideal, "One world, one family, one God". In this tremendous stupendous journey towards the ideal, all the philosophies, religious insights, scientific developments, artistic excellence merge together. In this beautiful integration the Indian way of life has its own share. The ideal in Indian way of life is not regional and national but universal man. The whole of Indian tradition aims towards making the man from his egotic way of life to egoless universal life. The Indian experiments in the inner life of man are recorded in the *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, *Puranas*, *Agamas* and *Bhagavath Gita*. In brief, the Indian way of life is based upon the concept of Varnashrama Dharma. In recent years this concept was very much misunderstood by the various writers and critics. In its original meaning it is simply a way of life for the individual and society. The ashram is for the individual and varna is for the society. The nation of high and low, practice of untouchability, birth based occupational castes were all rejected by Gandhi. Each individual should perform all the duties of the varnas - spiritual and intellectual (*Brahmin*), karma yoga (*Kshatriya*), shaving (*Vaisiya*) and mannual work (*Sudra and others*) - according to their age and environment. (e.g. Very old and infants can not do mannual work). The Hindu social philosophy is based upon this concept. The ashram is the place of work. Ashrams are described in the *Vedas*, in *Upanishads* in *Ramayan* and *Mahabharatha*. In Sanskrit literature we have a lot of mention about ashrams. In the ashrams of ancient times Indian people lived with a spiritual way of life and aimed towards the spiritual attainment. In modern times, Mahatma Gandhi revived the ancient Indian ashram tradition. In these ashrams he prepared people for their spiritual life as for the social life. Both social life and spiritual development must be combined together. If one divided them, both the aspects of life will be meaningless. Mahatma Gandhi started ashrams in South Africa and in India, to prepare individuals for a new way of life. Though the idea of ashrams are old, Gandhiji used them with a different purpose. He included social life of man as an important step in the spiritual life of man. At the sametime spiritually is the supreme task of mankind. Both the family life and the ashram life (the *vanaprastha* and *sanyasa* ashram) are steps towards the perfect and harmoniously developed man.

The idea of establishing an ashram came to Gandhiji after reading the remarkable book of Ruskin's *Unto this Last*. In his autobiography *My Experiments With Truth* he mentioned it under the chapter, "The Magic spell of a book". Immediately after the chapter, he explained how he put those ideas into practice, that is in the chapter "Phoenix Settlement". Latter on with the help of his friend Kallenbach, he established the Tolstoy Farm. There was a close resemblance between the life of Kallenbach and Mahatma Gandhi. One such is both of them were the followers of Leo Tolstoy. Comparatively Tolstoy Farm was bigger in space and many people came there to start a new way of life. With these experiments in the community life and experiences, Gandhiji established ashrams in India. The South African phase of life in the life of Mahatma Gandhi is an important one. Here, he conducted many experiments in smaller scales. These experiments gave him enough experiences to do better experiments in India.

Religion is the life breath to Mahatma Gandhi. Every other aspect of life must be based upon the religious insights of man. The ashrams of Mahatma Gandhiji are also religious institutions. When Gandhiji emphasized religion, he advocated the essence of religion which is the basis for all the religions. Religion never divides people and never disintegrates individuals. Individual's life is matured and the social life is united with the help of religion. In the ashrams, he emphasized that each and everyone must follow his/her own religion sincerely. Gandhiji's ashrams are dedicated towards Truth and Non-violence. In the beginning he named it as 'Settlement', 'Farm', etc. People from different walks of life came to these institutions in order to prepare themselves for a new way of life. When he came to India he named the community institution as ashrams. In all these ashrams (though they were earlier named as settlement or farm, they were earlier ashrams) he introduced the common kitchen, inter-religious prayer halls, manual work for every body. He also helped others to win their ego. To realize the external truth and to become the Universal man is the ideal of Mahatma Gandhi. The ashrams are the steps towards the ideal of truth-realization.

The first Indian ashram of Gandhiji was established at Kochrab in 1915 with 20 inmates who mainly came from South Africa. In the beginning it was run in a rented building. They did all the jobs by themselves. The idea of ashram is to work for one's ownself and work for the sake of humanity. So, there is no place for any kind of servants in the ashrams of Gandhi. Within a few months the number of inmates of Kochrab Ashram was doubled. So, the ashram was shifted to a spacious place with fields, gardens, cattles etc. this is the Sabarmathi Ashram. When Gandhiji established his ashrams in India, he was a man with enough experiences in the group behaviour, group dynamics, etc. When he was in Yeravda jail, he wrote letters to the inmates of the Sabarmathi ashram. These letters were translated into English under the title 'From Yeravada Mandir'. In fact these letters emphasized the importance of vows in the individual's life. Gandhiji explains the vows in detail. Life is meaningful and purposeful only if it is based upon the commands, rules and regulations. The unsystematic life is like the animal's life. Gandhi recommends the vows of Hindu tradition and also includes, some more vows. The inclusion is due to the demand of the time. The 16 chapter book *'From Yeravada Mandir'* begins with the vow of truth. An analysis

of the vows indicates that the vows are for preparing the individuals for spiritual life and also the national life. For Mahatma Gandhiji, even the national freedom struggle is spiritual in essence. Spiritually Gandhiji never recommends the renunciation of individual from the family or national life. Taking the vows and living an alternative style of life is not the sign of weakness but the real sign of strength. The eleven vows recommended by Gandhiji are Truth, ahimsa, bramacharya control of palate, non-stealing, non-possession, fearlessness, removal of untouchability, bread labour, unity of religions, swadeshi, humility and sacrifice.

If to-day women in India are enjoying so many facilities particularly equality with men, it is because of the sudden and spectacular call from Gandhi to join his world renowned political struggle for freedom for India. In ancient India, the literature pictures that women enjoyed equal place in all the walks of life with men. In the middle ages, woman lost all her positions, due to many factors. Gandhiji's sufferings and sacrifices and his profound concern for human welfare, place him above the common man and reminds us of the glorious life of great prophets, like Jesus and Mohammed.

Mahatma Gandhiji recommend a different kind of asceticism from that of the ancient Indian saints. He never recommended people to get away from the responsibilities of family life. As a true lover of humanity. Gandhiji realised the importance of family life in human society. Society depends upon family - men's functions. Family is the nucleus of the society. So, he advised people to live the life of the family man. Gandhiji himself was a married man and his family life helped him for the spiritual life. From Kasthurba he learned the art of non-violence. Like other fields of human life, in family life also, Gandhiji conducted some experiments. The early satyagraha experiments were conducted in his family. In his life Gandhiji was influenced by his father, mother and the servant mind. He learned the power of love from his father. When he was expecting hard punishments, his father did not punish him. Instead Gandhiji's father shed tears. This gave him a great shock as well as awakening in him, Gandhiji's religious life was based upon his mother's religious life. He used to observe the religious practices of his mother. Gandhiji's mother followed all the religious fastings, visits to the temples etc. As a small boy Gandhiji also followed her. In his later life he emphasized the importance of vows only because of his motherly influence. Another remarkable lady who shaped the philosophy of Gandhiji was the servant maid Rambha. When he was a boy, Gandhiji was afraid of darkness. The maid advised him to utter the name of God 'Ram' as remedy for fear of thieves, darkness and ghosts. Gandhiji had great faith in God only through Ram. All these incidents happened in the family of Gandhi. Each and every man's life is affected by his family background. That is why Gandhi in particular and Hinduism in general, emphasise the family life as an important one.

Though Gandhiji asked men and women to remain unmarried and to conduct their search of Truth, he knew that it was not possible for everybody to remain as honest bachelors. So he advised people to marry and fulfil the responsibilities of the family man. The family life is not against the spiritual life. But each one must realise the limits of the family life and prepare for the other spheres of life. Both husband and wife can live together as companions - spiritual companions.

Brahmacharya life is the search for real knowledge and that experience is possible through the family life also. The example to quote here is his family to Maharishi Ramakrishna Paramahansa and mother Saratha Devi. This is the ideal relationship between man and woman. In his later part of his life Mahatma Gandhiji lived a life of a brahmachari with Kasturba.

Gandhiji asked people to marry from outside their own caste. In between husband and wife there must be real love and understanding. They must not unite on the basis of money, caste, religion etc. He himself conducted some intercaste marriages. He went to the extent of saying that the marriages in the ashram must be inter-caste marriages. By these kind of marriages, Gandhiji wished to break down the evil of caste system which is a disease in the Hindu society.

There are sastras like Manu which declare that woman are inferior to man and they must be always under the supervision of men. But to-day, woman enjoys equal status with man. This is because of their education and knowledge. The contemporary Indian philosophers interest shifted from metaphysical investigations to social realities. Among the contemporary Indian philosophers Gandhiji gave superior place to woman and family life.

Gandhiji insisted that all ashramites must practise all the eleven vows in all sincerity and with a sense of humility. Any breach of any of those vows on the part of any body was discussed in the general assembly and at times, Gandhiji went on a fast as a means of self-purification, since he felt that any lapse on the part of any member of the Ashram, was reflection of his own imperfection. The open admission of one's lapse prevented recurrence of the same mistake since life in the ashram was an open book. After establishing the Sabarmathi Ashram, he invited a Harijan family to settle in the ashram and this incident infuriated the orthodox donors who boycotted the ashram and naturally contributions in kind and in cash dried up. In Sevagram Ashram a Bal Mandir for children was established and education on right lines was imparted to the children. Nature cure lessons were taught to the inmates, so that they could be strong and healthy to carry on their daily activities. Morning and evening prayers formed one of the features of the common life of the members of the ashram. In one of the prayer meetings he observed as follows, "I do not want a kingdom, salvation or heaven. What I want is to remove the troubles and difficulties of the oppressed". The poor and the down-trodden visitors to his room in the ashram were inspired by the simple and solemn atmosphere of his abode and were greatly struck by his simplicity, wit and humour and his great love and affection for the children. "We found him sitting on the floor before his desk in his own room. Upon the floor was spread a khadar cloth and as rising sun lighted up the whole place, he looked a wonderful figure amidst the simple and characteristic surroundings. The room was absolutely devoid of all ornaments, a few book shelves, a low desk, a desk - chair, which remained folded against the wall, a couple of spinning wheels and a low bench constitute its furniture. Some visitors to the Ashram asked him about his spinning practice and wanted to know whether Gandhiji's aim was to raise the depressed and oppressed classes or was it set to level all classes, Gandhiji replied in his usual wit that it was both - levelling up and a levelling down. It

aimed to prevent the exploitation of the depressed classes and also to prevent swelled heads. Above all, Gandhiji advocated the philosophy of bread - labour which has universal application, in his ashrams and this doctrine aims at the abolition of distinctions between the rich and the poor, the high and low and also the various differences between the capitalists and labourers.

The ashram way of life is the result of Mahatma Gandhiji's experiment in the community way of life. After reading John Ruskin's *"Unto This Last"* he decided to live a simple life which is the essence of *"Unto This Last"*. In his autobiography, Gandhiji recorded how he lived his life on the third principle of 'Unto This Last'. "The welfare of the last individual is in the welfare of the society". The ashram way of life is a step towards the Sarvodaya society. In the ashrams of Gandhiji people were disciplined for self-realisation. They were not merely the meditators but the constructive workers who worked for a better tomorrow.

The ashrams of Gandhiji served as the training centres for the truth seekers and they are also retreat centres for the satyagrahis. The ashrams of Gandhiji played an important role in the Indian freedom struggle movement. The ashrams are dedicated for Truth both in the spiritual and social sense of the term. When he set up these ashrams he faced innumerable problems but solved them in non-violent ways.

Gandhiji's Views on Ashram Vows and Pledges in Public

According to Gandhiji, a vow is a purely religious act, which cannot be taken in a fit of passion or in a state of excitement. On the other hand, it must be taken only with a mind purified and composed and with God as witness. On many occasions, acts which are not possible by ordinary self-denial become possible, with the aid of vows, which require extraordinary self denial. Therefore, vows can uplift us and enable us and also serve as guide - lines in all our actions, especially in all our moral activities. A majority of persons do require the binding and harmonizing force of pledges, since vows and pledges build up as well as tone up man's character and good conduct in all his activities. For example, everyone recognises the excellent and salubrious effects and changes produced by temperance pledges and with the support and moral courage derived from, such pledges, many have not succumbed to the temptations of drinking. In the words of Gandhiji "Personally, I hold that a man who deliberately and intelligently takes a pledge and then breaks it, forfeits his manhood. And just as a copper coin treated with mercury not only becomes valueless, when found out, but also makes its owner liable for punishment in the same manner a man who lightly pledges his word and then breaks it becomes a man of straw and fits himself for punishment here as well as hereafter. We find that interpretations of pledges has been a fruitful source of strife and conflicts all over the world, on matter how explicit the pledges are. People will twist the texts to suit their own purposes and we notice the same tendency both among the rich and the poor and from the prince down to the peasant, Selfishness and ulterior motives turn them blind, stubborn and irrational and finally they deceive themselves, in seeking to deceive the world and the Almighty. Gandhiji suggests that the golden rule is to accept the

interpretation honestly put on the pledge by the party administering the pledge. Another way to solve the knotty problem is to accept the interpretation of the weaker party, when two interpretation are possible. Rejection of the above peaceful ways lead to serif and conflicts and inequalities which are rooted in injustice and untruthfulness. In conclusion in the words of Gandhiji, "My religion or faith in Truth teaches me that a promise once made, a vow or a pledge once taken for a worthy cause must not be broken under any circumstances". It is not wonder, then, that Gandhiji exhorted and appealed to his countrymen to follow the pledges and not to break such sacred pledges taken in the Public. In the same manner Gandhiji observed strictly ashram vows both in letter and in spirit and thus set an outstanding example to the inmates of the ashram and to the people in general, all over world.

Gandhiji learned the greatness of manual labour from Leo Tolstoy. When he established the community centres, the ashrams, he never appointed any servants. John Ruskin also emphasized that there is no difference between the job of a barber and the job of a lawyer. So, Gandhiji instructed the inmates of the ashram to do all the jobs including the cleaning of the latrines. The ashram is a training centre for a simple and honest and good living.

Gandhian ashrams are the forerunners to a new society in which each and ever individual must look after his own needs and work for the welfare of others. Simple living and high thinking is the basic philosophy of Gandhiji. The four ashrams and four varnas of Hindu society are complementary to each other. When one is completed the other begins. They are not opposite to each other. The family life and the ashram (the vanaprastha and sanniyasa) are not opposites. Gandhiji renounced his professional career as early as 1903 in South Africa and dedicated himself to the service of his countrymen and humanity, for the rest of his life. He owned no private property, lived like a true Karmayogi and personified and embodied in himself the Gita ideas of service and detachment. In Hindu philosophy, we come across the path of intellect or gnana-marg 2) The path of devotion of Bhakti Marg 3) The path of action or Karma Marg. It is very remarkable that Gandhiji, by his own life and teachings, brought about a significant synthesis and harmonious blending of the above three paths and he is rightly called a true Nishkama Karmayogi and wears the Triple crown of yoga and he will be remembered as long as the Sun and the Stars shed their light on the earth and the immortal spirit of Gandhiji will guide humankind for ever.

APPENDIX

**Two Lectures by
Dr. Sushila Nayyar, a close associate of Gandhi**

Lecture I

Friends,

I am glad to be with you and thank Madurai Kamaraj University for doing me the honour of inviting me to deliver this years Gandhiji Memorial Lectures.

There has been a spontaneous resurgence of interest in Gandhiji and Gandhian ideology all over the world in recent times. We, in India, have seen Gandhiji work wonders. But, I wonder if we are conscious of our precious heritage. Gandhiji returned to India in 1915 and his whole life was an unceasing pursuit of truth and non-violence, till he fell a victim to the assassin's bullet on the 30th January, 1948, bearing witness to his living faith in non-violence. For them Gandhi is as much a legend as Rama and Krishna, Mohammad or Moses, Christ or the Buddha. There are many however, still in our midst who saw him in flesh and blood, who worked with him and witnessed the miracles, that he wrought, as a result which emerged a new self confidence, a new sense of self-respect and dignity among the helpless, illiterate down-trodden. Indians in South Africa at the turn of the last century and later among the dumb millions in India.

South Africa was the laboratory where he discovered, developed and for the first time applied, the technique of Satyagraha. The new technique enabled him to bring within the reach of the common man the application of the age old precepts of truth and love as effective weapons for fighting injustice, oppression and exploitation. The messages of love was delivered by the Buddha, Christ and many other seers and sages in India and all over the world from time immemorial. But, it was left to Gandhi to use the super energy of love for fighting injustice. When atom was split and atomic energy at the collective level put to destructive use towards the end of the Second World War, Gandhiji was asked how his nonviolence would face the atomic challenge. He calmly replied, "Nonviolence more powerful than the atom bomb, because it can influence and change the minds of men who develop and use the atom bomb".

I went abroad to brush up my medical knowledge soon after Gandhiji's death. I had gone to jail in the Quit India movement soon after my M.D. Examination. Thanks to the British Government, I had the opportunity of serving and learning at the feet of Ba and Babu for almost two years in the Agha Khan Palace Detention Camp. After our release in May 1944 I participated in Gandhiji's mission of mercy during the pre and post partition holocaust of communal hatred and violence in Bengal, the Punjab and Delhi. In 1948, therefore, I felt the need to refresh my medical knowledge and bring it up-to-date in order to make a new beginning in a world which had changed for me with Bapu's death.

I left India in June 1948 for the USA and on my way back in 1950, I spent three months in Europe. In Germany, interest in Gandhi and his techniques were at its peak in September 1950, especially among the German youth. They came to meet me in groups and wanted to know how Gandhi had been able to defeat the mighty British. They said that Germany had worked very hard and had developed a wonderful army and first rate armaments and yet they had been defeated by the British in the First and the Second World Wars, while Gandhi had let unarmed Indians to victory against the might of the British empire. They wanted to understand the secret of Gandhi's power.

The world expected great things from India and India's prestige everywhere was very high in those days. It is sad that not only we did not come up to those expectations, we deviated from the Gandhian path and became camp followers of

western powers, whom we could have given a lead. The result is that 36 years after independence. (This talk was delivered in 1983), India is still poor, hungry and illiterate and we are facing serious problems in every walk of life. The Indian youth is unhappy, frustrated, cynical and is questioning the very values bequeathed to us by our forefathers, the values which made it possible for India to produce a Gandhi.

In 1969, the Gandhi year, several universities had decided to institute a course of Gandhian studies and some of them had constructed Gandhi Bhavans on their campuses, but so far as I know not much has been done to promote a serious study of Gandhian ideas, ideals and techniques and Gandhi Bhavans have not been able to interest the students and the staff in Gandhi and his message. The reason is simple. Gandhi had not left behind an abstract philosophy, which can be studied and taught in ivory towers. He had bequeathed to us and to mankind a way of life which is necessary to study and understand Gandhi a way of non-violence or Satyagraha. Gandhian way of life is completely different from the modern trend of seeking comforts and speed, mass production and sophisticated modern machines which can almost replace man. Gandhi stood for simple living, walking in foot where possible, making maximum use of one's own hands and supplementing human labour with animal power and simple machines, which could be used as tools by men and women and did not become masters of men, so to say. Gandhi did not believe in mass production or consumerism. Mass production needs markets which were available to European powers in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, whereby hangs the tale of colonialism and imperialism, no longer considered honourable by anybody any where. Gandhi believed in voluntary reduction of one's wants and taking from nature only as much was absolutely necessary, returning the wastes back to nature, so that the process of recycling and renewal could go on and protect the natural resource. He knew that the natural resources of planet earth are not inexhaustible, a truth which has been realised by scientists, long after Gandhi had presented it to mankind in the early years of the 20th century. When Gandhi wrote *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*, many thought, he was turning the clock and wanted to take us back into the middle ages. It has however, been now realised that he was far ahead of his time, whether it be in the area of ecological balance, protection of environment and conservation of natural resources or the realisation of the futility of physical force as a means of setting disputes, or of comprehending the importance of simple living and the dignity of labour.

The sale of the book, *Freedom at Midnight*, and the long queues for tickets to see the film "Gandhi", bear witness to world wide interest in Gandhi and Gandhian Thought. The Western world finds it difficult to understand Gandhi, but they are beginning to see that he alone can provide a ray of hope to war weary humanity and enable them to find answers to the problems that face humankind.

We, in India, who share with Gandhi the common heritage of Indian philosophy should find it easier to understand and absorb the message that was left to us in his life and in his death. He often said: "My life is my message". It is, therefore, necessary for the youth of India to read the story of Gandhi's life

and understand who was this man about whom the great scientist Einstein said: "Generation to come, it may be, will scarce believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth".

In the Western world in these days there is a strong human potential movement. Those working in this movement believe that most of us do not develop to our full potential. Large parts of human brain remain unused. Indian philosophers, seers and sages have told us that man has the potential to become God. The various incarnations of God are a constant reminder to us that anyone who develops the spark of divinity within, to the maximum extent comes to be worshipped as God. There is no limit for man to develop his potential. Mahatma Gandhi's life presents a vivid picture as to how a simple lad, born in orthodox Hindu family could develop his potential by strict adherence to truth. The pursuit of truth led him to nonviolence or love. For him, truth and nonviolence were the two sides of the same coin.

Gandhiji was born on 2nd October, 1869 at Porbander and was the youngest son of Putli Bai and Karamchand Gandhi called Kaba Gandhi; dewan or prime minister of the princely state of Porbander. Mohan grew up in comfort and was not a very bright student in school. He was, however, intelligent and was greatly influenced by his mother, a deeply religious woman, who observed many fasts, and by his Aya Rambha. Mohan was of average built. He was shy and timid and was terribly afraid of darkness. Rambha told him to repeat *Ramnam*, whenever he was afraid and the fear would disappear, *Ramnam* thus became his constant companion and when ever he was in trouble in body or mind, he invoked *Ramnam*. No wonder, when he fell to the assassin's his last words were '*Hei Ram*'.

As a young boy, Gandhi saw the drama, *Harishchandra*. The way *Harishchandra* suffered for the sake of truth made a deep impression on his mind and made him decide to be always truthful. As young Mohan grew up, he made friends with other boys, one of whom was not a good companion. He told Mohan that in order to become free of British rule, Indians must become strong and in order to become strong, they must eat meat as the British do. Mohan's family were strict vegetarians. They were Vaishnavas, greatly influenced by Jainism. Jain sadhus were frequent visitors to Mohan's home. So the boys decided to eat meat outside. One evening the friend cooked meat and they ate it near the river. When Mohan's mother asked him at night, why he was not hungry for his dinner, he had to tell lies and make some excuse. It upset him. He did not wish to depart from truthfulness and, therefore, decided that he would start taking meat, when his parents were no longer there, so that he could do so without telling lies. At school, Mohan was not brilliant but he got on fairly well with his studies. One day, the Inspector of schools came and asked the boys to write down spellings of some English words. The school teacher went round whispering to the boys correct spellings. Mohan was wedded to truth and did not wish to hear him. The result was that Mohan was the only in the class, whose answer was wrong.

Mohan's elder brother and the evil genius of the bad friend led them into other escapades. The elder brother had got into debt. He suggested to Mohan that they might go to a goldsmith who would take out a small piece of his gold

bangle, reshape it and give them money to pay back the debt. No one would notice that the bangle had been cut and reshaped. Mohan agreed to help his brother. But he could not sleep that night. The untruthfulness and deceit involved in his act oppressed him. So, he wrote a letter to his father in which he admitted his fault. The father was a very strict disciplinarian and highly disapproved of all deception. Mohan gave the letter to his father early in the morning and stood with his head bent down expecting to be beaten up by the angry father. When no blows descended on him, he looked up and saw tears flowing from his father's eyes. No amount of beating could have made a deeper impression on Mohan than his father's tears. The father had been deeply moved by his son's truthfulness and the father's tears had further strengthened Mohan's determination to be always truthful.

Mohan was married to Kasturba at the age of thirteen. She was a few months older than him and had not gone to school though she had learnt to read and write. Mohan tried to educate her, a process which continued, till the very end. We were all impressed and amused, when Bapu used to give lessons to Bapu in Geography and other subjects in the Aga Khan Palace Detention Camp. She would get mixed up and enquire if Punjab was the Capital of Lahore. He also read with her the *Ramayana* and made selections for her out of it, as Ba was not interested in long descriptions of Sita's wedding and things of that sort. He asked my brother Pyarelal to translate the selected *Ramayana* verses into Gujarathi for Ba.

Mohan's father died while he was with his wife and it left a strong guilt feeling in him. It was probably a factor, which led to his gradual withdrawal from carnal love and for taking a vow of *brahmacharya* in his early thirties in South Africa.

After his father's death, Mohan joined Bhavnagar College and decided to go to England to become a barrister. In those days, orthodox Hindus did not approve of overseas journeys and Mohan was threatened with ex-communication, if he went to England. But, he went all the same with his departure. He was not to touch wine, woman and meat. He went to England in 1888 at the age of nineteen. Some of his friends tried hard to persuade him not to adhere to his vows and be normal, as they put it. But, he did not depart from the right path and strictly observed his vows. There were many temptations but he did not succumb to them. One of his English land-ladies invited him to tea every Sunday afternoon and introduced to him young English girls. He was strongly attracted to one of them. He was young hardly out of his teens and had not told anyone that he was married. His sense of truthfulness saved him here also. He wrote a letter to the landlady telling her that he had left behind a wife and child and apologised for not disclosing it earlier. He was prepared for her annoyance, but she appreciated his frankness and reiterated her invitation to him to come to tea every Sunday evening.

In his early days in England Mohan tried to become an English gentleman and in order to do so started taking lessons in dancing, violin playing and elocution. But, his basic honesty and truthfulness made him give up these pursuits

and concentrate on his studies. He kept an account of every penny he spent, was extremely frugal and often walked to classes, which enabled him to save bus fare and get good exercise. He began to cook his own food and started enjoying food without spices. He became a member of the Vegetarian Society, where he made many new friends and was introduced to public speaking. He became a vegetarian by conviction as the result of participating in the meetings of the Vegetarian Society.

Missionaries tried to convert him to Christianity. He read the *Bible* but his truthfulness demanded that he should first know more about his own religion. He started reading the *Bhagavath Gita*, which became his guide throughout his life.

He had to pass the London Matric Examination before he could enrol for his law studies and that involved learning Latin, which he found very useful. He often used to tell us that knowledge of Latin was necessary for mastering English and other European languages, and Sanskrit was for learning Indian languages. He completed his law studies in due course and came back to India as a full-fledged barrister in 1891. He was deeply grieved to learn on reaching India that his mother had died shortly before his return.

Gandhi tried to set up his practice of Law in Bombay and Rajkot. He was still a shy young man and when he got up to argue his first case in court, he found himself tongue-tied. In course of time he overcame his shyness and established a flourishing practice of law in South Africa. But, he always adhered to truth. He tried to settle as many cases as possible out of court, and if ever he found out in the course of a case that his client had not told him the truth, he returned the brief and gave back the money the client might have paid him. However, God had not sent him on earth to show his brilliance as a lawyer but for a different purpose.

Gandhi had gone to England at the age of nineteen in 1888 and came back to India in the year 1891 as a Bar at Law. He had not been doing very well in his law practice in India and when an Indian merchant offered him a job in South Africa to help with one of his law suits there, Gandhi accepted it as an escape. It became the turning point of his life. He went to South Africa for one year in the first instance in April 1893. He experienced racial discrimination in extreme form from the very start and saw the miserable plight of his countrymen, who were victims of colour prejudice, which was rampant in that country. Many Indians had gone to South as indentured labourers. The indenture system was virtually a form of slavery under which they suffered extreme hardship. But, if they survived the five years of indenture period they could settle down as free citizens and have a fairly good life. The indentured labourers came from U.P., Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Andhra and Orissa. A number of free Indians had followed them especially, from Gujarat. They were mainly businessmen who had gone there in search of living and most of them were doing well. But, all Indians were called coolies and treated as inferior human beings. They suffered humiliations at every step. They put up with insults and ill treatment for the sake of earning a better livelihood but Gandhi made them aware of the injustice of the situation, and

conscious of the fact that they could and should fight for their rights. In this process he discovered the mighty weapon of Satyagraha, Satya in nonviolent action with love.

Gandhi came back after settling the case for which he had gone to South Africa in 1892. The Indian community, however, could not fight for their rights without his help and guidance. He had promised the Indian community, in South Africa that he could come back if they needed him. They did need him and he went back and returned with his wife and two boys. He was almost lynched by the white mob. The wife of the police Commissioner happened to be passing by, covered him with her umbrella and stood between him and his assailants, till police help came. The incident made front page news in all newspaper. When Chamberlain, secretary of State for Colonies, ordered prosecution of the assailants, Gandhiji refused to be a party to the prosecution. He said they were ignorant victims of blind race prejudice and punishment could not remove it. This act of generosity on his part greatly enhanced his prestige and set the stage for things to come.

M.K. Gandhi, Bar at law, went to South Africa in order to earn a living. His whole life was changed by what he experienced. He was thrown out of a train, because non-whites were not allowed to travel in first class in colour-conscious South Africa. The Indians were insulted and treated as second class citizens. They were all coolies for the white man. Gandhi made the Indians in South Africa conscious of their own inner strength and made them stand up for their self-respect and resist injustice and oppression with the power of nonviolence.

In South Africa, Gandhi was deeply influenced by the writing of Ruskin, Thoreau and Tolstoy. He made a deep study of his own religion - Hinduism - Christianity, and Islam, and discovered the basic unity of all religions. He became convinced that religion was like one's own mother. Each man loves and respects his own mother, but he may not expect others to have the same feeling towards her. At the same time basic unity of religions requires every one to have equal respect for all religions. He did not feel enthused by the concept of religious tolerance because one tolerates something which is not quite as good as one would like it to be. Each religion, if practised sincerely, can lead to man's highest development and realisation of the supreme. Equal respect for all religions, he said was necessary. Later he included it in the eleven vows he laid down for the Ashram inmates.

Gandhi's first experience of nonviolent resistance came when he was travelling on a stage coach from Maritzberg to Durban. He was given a seat next to the driver as the white passengers did not want a brown skin inside the coach. He accepted it. Later, however when one of the passengers wanted to smoke and asked him to vacate his seat for him and sit on the floor, he refused to do so. He was willing to sit inside the coach but not to sit at the white man's feet. It angered the white man. He tried to throw him off the coach. But, Gandhi held on to it firmly and refused to yield. The other passengers ultimately dissuaded their white co-passenger from harassing the Indian. This experience was an eye-opener for him. When narrated what he had to suffer on the train and on the

coach, to his hosts, they consoled him by saying that the Indians had to pocket insults and suffer humiliation in order to earn their living. Gandhi could not accept it. He slowly made them realise the need for making sacrifices for the sake of their self-respect. He introduced them to non-violent resistance with all its implication such as no ill-will towards the opponent, no desire to defeat or humiliate him or take revenge but simply to make him see the injustice of his action and mend his ways in his own interest as well as in the interest of his victims. Together they developed the mighty weapon of Satyagraha.

He has gone to South Africa for one year but stayed there for over twenty years. He did return to India after settling the case which had taken him to South Africa. The Indian community however, needed his help for getting just and fair treatment as equal citizens of the British Empire. He has to go back as he promised them that he would do so, if they called him. He set up his practice of law along with public work. Slowly his life changed. From a flourishing barrister, who lived with his family in western style, he became a convert to simple living and reduce his wants to the bare minimum. Public life soon demanded all his time. He donated all he had to start the Phoenix Settlement, where they all lived as equals, each one worked according to his capacity and took according to his need. But unlike communism there was no compulsion. It was a voluntary decision on his part to share, with his co-whatever he had. The ashram inmates became his family.

Ruskin's *Unto This Last* made a powerful impression on him. It led him to believe that work of a lawyer and a barber was of equal value and should have equal remuneration as each served society and has a right to earn a living through his vocation. Gandhiji translated this into, Gujarati, under the title sarvodaya. He came to believe that the good of the individual is contained in the good of all, that a life of labour, the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicrafts man is the life of worth living.

Mare Edmund Jones writes in "Gandhi Lives". "It must be realised that the ideas of Englishman, like so may others that entered into Gandhi's thinking, were assimilated into an eventual originality of Hindu insight. At first they were seminal, quickening Gandhi's own thoughts, but never making him a disciple in any true sense. Gandhi, who always exalted the individual, was himself ever original, and in most respects a prophet whose contribution was for generations to come as well as his own".

Thoreau's *Essay on Civil Disobedience* greatly appealed to Gandhi. He persuaded the Indians to resist compulsory registration and other oppressive law introduced by the Government of South Africa and go to jail, where they were to behave as ideal prisoners. Ashram women led by Kasturba also went to jail. Gandhiji's youngest son, the late Devadas Gandhi narrated to us once how at one stage ashram had no one over 14 years of age. He said "In the evenings we felt lonely and missed our parents. So we used to sit round the table and sing "*Sham Sware Chidian a Kar Choon Choon Choon Choon Karti Hain*" You can imagine the pathos of the situation.

Ultimately, General Smuts negotiated with Gandhi, conceded the minimum demand of the Indian community and Gandhi left South Africa in 1914, sending his party to India direct and himself came back via England. Glowing tributes were paid to him at farewell meetings everywhere.

Smuts had been a resolute adversary, but he became an admirer of soul force. Gandhi had conceived a spiritual movement for a political objective. Smuts said that the men revered were those who could do what they thought right, in the teeth of the nation's opposition. Such a man was - Woodrow Wilson, standing alone, dying against the American people for what he knew to be the salvation of the world. Another was Gokhale who had visited South Africa a little earlier, at a distinguished gathering in Johannesburg, had paid an eloquent tribute to Gandhi. He said that India recognised in Gandhi a great and illustrious son of whom she was proud beyond words and was sure that men of all races and creeds would recognise in him one of the more remarkable personalities of their time; but it was only those who had the privilege of knowing him intimately who knew "how the pure and indomitable spirit that dwelt in that frail looking frame, that glorified whatever it touched, would break but never bent in a just and righteous cause".

The Friend, the Bolefontein newspaper in South Africa paid a striking tribute to Gandhi's personality. It said, "Few will grudge tribute to the character and work of Gandhi. An able man, he has never allowed any selfish motive of place or pay to dictate his course of action. He fought often a long, but always a clean straight fight for the cause for which he endured hardship and imprisonment, but never disgrace. It does a country good to have had as a citizen a man of Gandhi's rectitude of character and resoluteness of purpose. It is good to have such a man to disagree with and we have differed and continue to differ fundamentally from him. He is probably thousands of years ahead of the world".

Costly gifts were given to him at the parting in various places. He refused to take anything with him. He set up a Trust and left everything to it for the service of the Indian community.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi returned at last to India in 1915 with a "profound distrust of western civilization", and a feeling that it represented nothing but "a triumph of gross materialism and brute force". The first world war was going on when Gandhi came back. As a Satyagrahi, he refused to take advantage of the opponent's difficulty and went round helping recruitment of Indians in the army. His complete disillusionment with the British Imperialism was yet to come. He and other Indian leaders at that time wanted home rule and be a part of the British Empire like other self-governing colonies. The Empire in their eyes stood for equality and democracy and not for exploitation. The illusion, however did not last long.

At the end of the war the imperial government not only did not agree to give Home Rule to India but punished those who asked for it. The result was the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy. Those of you who may have seen the film Gandhi, will know that Jallianwala Bagh has high buildings all round with only one entry which also serves as the exit and without giving a notice or asking the people to disperse,

he ordered firing. In the subsequent enquiry he admitted that the firing stopped only when his men had no more ammunition. India had asked for bread and received bullets. The iron entered India's soul. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi became a determined opponent of imperialism and called British rule "a satanic government" which had resulted in the four-fold ruin of India, moral, social, economic and political. Non-co-operation with the British Government, and civil disobedience of satyagraha were to take India to the cherished goal of independence.

Gandhi had started Phoenix Settlement in Natal and Tolstoy Farm in the Transvaal, which were precursors to the Ashrams he later set up in India, where all lived as members of an expanded family. The community became the family. In South Africa, the principles of voluntary sharing and giving to the community the maximum that one was capable of and taking from it the minimum one required to meet one's needs, had been accepted and put into practice. In India, the concept of community life took the form of Ashrams with all the implication of and association with the Ashrams of the rishis of ancient India. A very strict code of discipline was prescribed for the ashram inmates summarised in the eleven vows which became a part of the morning and evening prayers. These eleven vows were.

1. *Ahimsa*, Nonviolence implied not only eschewing the use of physical force and violence, but also not to harbour feelings of ill-will anger, hatred and revenge towards the opponent and instead cultivate active good will and have for him (the opponent) even when one may have to oppose him tooth and nail on principle.

2. *Satya* or Truth implied consistency in one's thought, word and deed and eschewing of all secrecy,

3. *Asteya* or non stealing. Anyone who takes more than what he needs is a thief, said Gandhi. Accumulation by some leads to deprivation for others of their bare necessities.

4. *Brahmacharya* or self-control. The concept goes beyond exercising self-control with regard to sex. Gandhi believed that the creative energy of men and women through all round self control, can be channalised for creating a new nonviolent social order in which there is no exploitation or oppression, and co-operation replaces competition.

5. *Aparigraha* or non-accumulation implies one should take from nature what one needs and return to her the rest along with one's "new contributions". There is every reason to believe that nature produce's enough for man's needs but not for his greed.

6. *Sharira Shrama*, (body labour) was given great importance. The *Bhagwad Gita* says that those who eat without work and sacrifice are thieves. Vinoba used to say that the meaning of the Vedas did not become clear to him unless he had done eight hours of body labour. That there is need for a balance between physical

and mental work is accepted by all. Every one knows the importance of games and sports for relaxation and keeping fit. Gandhi made productive work and body labour as a means of relaxation, yajna and self-improvement.

7. *Aswad* (control of palate) means one should eat to sustain the body not for satisfying the palate. I have read that in olden days the Romans were so fond of good food that they would eat and then take an emetic and vomit so that they could eat again. Such a practice will be considered barbarous today. Excessive eating, highly spiced, fried and fatty food are bad for health. In Gandhiji's Ashram food was boiled, cooked without spices and was wholesome. It was tasty too. We need to develop the taste to appreciate and enjoy the natural flavours of vegetables, fruits, and other articles of food.

As a doctor I can tell you that many illnesses are due to over eating or wrong eating. Under nutrition or mal-nutrition owing to poverty is another cause of disease. For that different remedies are necessary.

8. *Abhaya* or fearlessness, it is interesting to note that in the sixteenth chapter of the *Bhagwad Gita*, Lord Krishna, while describing the 'Daivi Sampada' godly qualities, gives the first place to fearlessness. Gandhi often said that cowards could never be nonviolent. Nonviolence requires courage of a higher order than violence. He preferred that those who did not have the courage or knowledge to resist injustice nonviolently, should resist it with violence rather than remain silent witnesses to wrong doing. Gandhi was convinced that nonviolence alone could end injustice and oppression, because it brings about a change of heart and changes the thinking of the wrong doer. It enables him to right and what is wrong and choose the right path.

9. *Sarva Dharma Samabhava* Equal Respect for All Religions, was absolutely necessary on the part of those who would become Satyagrahis, said Gandhi.

10. *Swadeshi* was not only a method of self reliance but by adhering to this vow, Indians could help their less fortunate brethren to earn an honourable living. We have just had the non-aligned conference in Delhi. The slogan of the underdeveloped world today is "Trade rather than aid". We, the developing countries want the developing countries to buy our products even though these may be a little more expensive or a little less perfect, so that the developing countries can stand on their own feet and preserve their self-respect. It is not then our duty to buy the swadeshi and hand made cloth and other products, even though these may be a little more expensive and less refined, to enable our less fortunate brethren to earn a living through the labour of their hands and rear their families with self-respect and self-confidence.

11. Removal of Untouchability was a symbol of non-exploitation of the weak by the strong. Gandhiji considered untouchability a sin and blot on Hinduism and declared that if untouchability lives Hinduism must die. A votary of nonviolence could never practice untouchability, he said.

All Ashramites were to endeavour to practise these 11 vows in all sincerity and with a sense of humility. Any breach of any of these vows on the part of anybody was discussed in the general assembly and at times Bapu would go on a fast as means of self-purification. He felt that any lapse on the part of any of his people was a reflection of his own imperfection. The open admission of one's lapse prevented a recurrence of the same mistake. Life in the Ashram was an open book. There was hardly any privacy. It was hard on sensitive new comers. Bapu deprecated sensitiveness. He often said that a highly sensitive temperament, a thin skin, was nothing to be proud of. Those who would enter public life should develop a Rhinoceros hide, he used to say.

Coupled with the observance of the 11 vows a thick skin can be an advantage. Without them, I am afraid, it can lead to false pride and disregard of public opinion which one often sees among public men in India these days.

Gandhiji set up an Ashram at Sabarmati and later at Sevagram. The Ashrams served as training ground for Satyagrahis and also as a place for recuperation for the tired, worn out or sick workers who could come back to the Ashram from the field for restoration of the health of the body and the mind. Soon after Sabarmati Ashram came into being, he invited a Harijan family to come and live in the Ashram. It infuriated the orthodox who boycotted his Ashram and contribution in cash and kind dried up. The Ashram Manager came to report to him one morning while he was spinning, that there was no money to buy the provisions for the next meal. Gandhiji sat at his spinning wheel unperturbed. He narrated the story to us in the Aga Khan Palace Detention Camp, how quite unexpectedly a car came and stopped near his hut, out came a businessman who handed him a bundle of currency notes and went away. Gandhiji said he saw God's hand in this incident. His faith in God and nonviolence was deeper than ever.

Gandhiji told his countrymen that unless they stopped exploiting the weak in their own society by putting an end to untouchability they had no right to ask the British to stop exploiting India. I will not take you to the details of his work for the removal of untouchability. Suffice to say that he staked his life more than once and quickened the conscience of the nation. He opposed separate electorates for the untouchables because that would brand them as untouchables forever. He accepted the principle of reservation of seats for the Harijans for a limited number of years, during which the Hindus were to work hard for the removal of the handicaps from which the Harijans suffered owing to the practice of untouchability over the centuries. The Hindu society was to do it as a form of penance for the injustice done to the Harijans by their forefathers.

Gandhiji considered removal of untouchability as one of the four pillars of Swaraj. The other three were Hindu-Muslim unity, Khadi, and Prohibition of all intoxicating drinks and drugs. It is a sad story that free India is content to rely on legal measurers for the removal of untouchability rather than regard it as our moral and ethical duty to save our Harijan brethren in the spirit of penance for past sins. The other three pillars of Swaraj too have not received the attention they deserved. The result is that our Swaraj is not the Swaraj that Gandhiji

strived for. It had too many ugly spots. The Harijans continue to suffer indignities and worse at the hands of caste Hindus. Divisions and discrimination within Harijan society, on the basis of caste, is as bad if not worse. The educated Harijans generally become alienated from the rest of Harijan's may become M.L.As, M.Ps, Ministers and high officials but the special concessions in education and in service continue to be given to hem and their children. This causes resentment in the minds of the poor caste Hindus. If the caste Hindu had served the Harijans, as Bapu wanted, they could have by now suggested socio-economic basis for special concessions without being misunderstood. As things stand they are afraid to do so. Those in power cannot take the risk of losing Harijan votes. Those in opposition are also in the same boat. Untouchability and difficulties persist in some areas. The result is that the date of reservation on old lines is extended every ten years and discontent keeps on simmering and boils over from time to time. Some of the young Harijans on learning of their constitutional rights try to assert their equality. The poor and ignorant caste Hindus in the villages have not been educated to accept it and tend to behave violently social workers and police are not there to promote harmony among them. The legal processes are long and tortuous and do not promote reconciliation. It is the moral duty of caste Hindus to help our Harijan brethren to become equal citizens in every sense of the term and they must learn to take it up as a penance as advised by Gandhiji.

As for Khadi, the government has set up a Khadi and village Industries Commission but no one has taken the trouble to explain the basic philosophy of Khadi to the workers. The result is trade unionism, exploitation of the spinners in some cases and even adulteration of Khadi by mixing up mill yarn with hand spun.

As for prohibition, the less said the better, the liquor contractors have become all powerful. Prohibition has been given up all over the country except in Gujarat. I remember the late T.T. Krishnamachari telling me how as a result of prohibition, the construction labour in Madras had become well-fed and well-clothed. In Chattisgarh mining area, Shankar Guha Nyogi by weaning the miners from liquor, has greatly improved their living conditions. I myself saw 10,000 men and women, who have given up liquor. They used to be in debt but now they have opened post office accounts. Their children are now well-fed, well-clothed and are going to school. Many labourers had sold their lands when they drank. Some of them have now bought land. They all have bicycles and transistor radios and steel utensils in their homes.

We are told prohibition leads to the use of spurious liquor and kills people. There have been more tragedies of this nature after scrapping of prohibition and in many places liquor contractors have been known to finance illicit distillation with powerful backing from politicians. The Government says they need liquor revenue. Official studies have shown that when government earns one rupees from liquor revenue, the man who drinks spends four or five rupees. Thus if a result for prohibition the governments loses 1000 crores, the people will save four or five thousand crores. When they spend it on house-hold reeds, the government gets more taxes or saving. It has been proved from government records that in the dry states increases of sales tax alone was more than the loss of excise revenues.

Another argument against prohibition is that leads to corruption. On this analogy, laws against smuggling, adulteration of food and drugs, collection of tax or housing, all offer opportunities for corruption. What is needed is determination on the part of the government to curb corruption through implementation of laws with vigilance and efficiency on the one hand and help of vigilant public opinion on the other.

We are told to educate the people not to drink. This cannot succeed so long as the liquor vendors are there at every street corner to tempt the poor to drink and the liquor trade lures them to drink in all kinds of subtle ways. Respectability given to drink habit, by lifting of prohibition and the cocktail parties thrown by the rich lure the youth to drink, many of whom go from drinking to intoxicating drugs. This is a phenomenon which is causing world wide concern. At the Nur Manzil Psychiatric Clinic in Lucknow, I saw a number of highly educated and trained engineers and other young professionals taking treatment for drug addiction. There must be many more in other places. India can ill afford the loss.

Tamilnadu became dry soon after independence. It is a pity that it has gone wet. Let youth demand dry laws in its own and in society's interests. Gandhiji attached the highest importance to prohibition and considered drinking worse than thieving and even prostitution. He said that if he became the dictator of India for one hour, his first job will be to close down all liquor shops without paying compensation. It is quite clear that the poor cannot have a better life, unless we can stop the wastage of their money through liquor. For the increase of productivity also, prohibition is necessary. Even Russia is finding liquor menace from the productivity point of view. The Indian youth must have all their faculties intact to face and solve the problems before them and their country. Alcohol dims the power of clear thinking and discrimination. It undermines will power and capacity for action. How can we make progress if we cannot think clearly and act with determination. Romain Rolland, the great French intellectual, described Gandhi as the most perfect *Karmayogi*; "He came in direct lineage of the great spiritual personalities who illuminated the religious and moral history of India", he said Gandhi's *Karamayoga* led him to the service of the down trodden. To raise the level of living of the lowest of the low, prohibition was essential, said Gandhi.

You know how Gandhi was deeply moved by Ruskin's *Unto This Last*, which changed his life in South Africa. Tolstoy, the Russian sage, and his book, *The Kingdom of god is within You*, also had a powerful influence on him. The third great man who influenced Gandhi in his evolution was the Jain sage and poet Shri Raichand Bhai whose human "*vaishnava, jan to tene kahaiya, je pir paraj janere*". (He alone is a vaishnava, who understands the pain of another) became his guide throughout his life. Tolstoy believed in the cultivation of character. He said "To change another man's outlook on life one must oneself have a better one and live in accord with it". His sociological work, *What Shall We do Then?*, is a striking confession of a man who set out to achieve it by closely and dispassionately examining prevalent conditions and endeavouring to alleviate the suffering of society around him. It is remarkable that Tolstoy visited every conceivable place

in Moscow to discover the root cause of poverty and misery, destitution, filth, drunkenness and immorality. He went to the unfortunates with a heart to serve and, this demanded of him an exemplary character. He abandoned smoking. He became a strict vegetarian. He wore cheap and coarse clothes of a peasant. He did farm labour among the peasants. He learnt boot making as a handicraft. It is interesting to note that Gandhiji also learnt to make boots in the jails of South Africa. He presented a pair of boots made by him in Jail to General Smuts after their successful negotiations on the minimum demands of Indians in South Africa. Gandhiji had correspondence with Tolstoy. The Russian sage paid glowing tributes to Gandhi for bringing the age old principles of truth and nonviolence within the reach of the common man to fight injustice.

Tolstoy, after studying life in Moscow came to the conclusion that "It is a pleasure to share one's comfort. It is a sin not to do so". He said "The poor are also human beings with a past and with passions, temptations, errors, thoughts and questions. Between the rich and the poor, stands a wall of cleanliness and education that we have erected and reared with our wealth, and to be able to aid the poor we have first of all to destroy that wall. The more money a person possesses the more he obliges others to work for him. The root cause of poverty, is our wealth. The well being for men consists in being united together and to set up that Kingdom of God, i.e, of love, which we all recognise to be the highest aim of human life. No true or lasting sophistication is obtainable by the pursuit of wealth and personal enjoyments. True life lies only in obeying the voice within. Your great poet, Subramania Bharati, had expressed the same sentiments in a most telling manner in his poetry.

Gandhiji identified himself with the poorest of the poor. He always listened to the voice within. He had given up living and dressing in western style in South Africa and when he returned to India, he dressed as an Indian peasant. In Champaran he found out that the poor did not have enough clothes, that in the villages of Champaran often the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law had only one sari, between them which each used, when she went out. Later after a visit to South India, he realised how short the poor wore of cloths and how little could suffice for one's needs. He decided to take to loin cloth. In the Gandhi Centenary year, artist Kanu Desai made a beautiful painting showing the evolution of Mohan to Mahatma, depicting the change of his dress at different stages. At Delhi he used to stay in the scavengers colony, the lowest caste among the outcaste. His identification with the poorest of the poor made him see God in the poor and he coined the phrase 'Daridra Narayan'. He was always listening to the 'still small voice within'. He had a wonderful sense of humour, I remember how during one of our train journeys Agatha Harrison, an English friend of India, was travelling with us. Everyone was sleeping when the train reached Itarsi. He called the bearer, ordered tea and toast and then woke up Agatha and with a chuckle told her. "Go and take your poison" Gandhiji's inner evolution continued along with his pursuit of Indian freedom. He led several Satyagraha movements in India. His first Satyagraha was in Champaran, Bihar, for the rights of the cultivators against the British Indigo planters, who exploited the reasantly. Another important satyagraha he led was for the rights of the Textile labourers of Ahmedabad in which he made Anusuya Behn, sister of Ambalal Sarabai, the textile magnet, the

president of the labour union, thus pitting up sister against brother in nonviolent resistance. In 1918 the Kheda satyagraha for remission of land revenue was a minor affair as compared with a later Bardoli Satyagraha. Another important early Satyagraha was the one against the Rowlatt act, a black law which allowed for no appeal. The Punjabis protested against the injustice of this Draconian legislation which permitted no appeal, no Vakil (lawyer), no *dalil* (argument). The protest led to Jallionwalla Bagh tragedy. It resulted in the institution of an enquiry commission. Each of these Satyagrahas is a thrilling story which you can read for yourself.

The major Satyagraha struggles were the non-cooperation movement and Bardoli Satyagraha of the twenties, the Salt satyagraha of the thirties and the Quit India Movement of the forties. Each had, its own characteristic features consistent with Gandhi's inner evolution at each state. The story of Indian independence struggle is a long and exciting stage which I am sure most of you must have read or will read.

I was fortune enough to be able to take part in the last of the Satyagraha, the Quit India Movement. It gave me the opportunity to see Ba and Bapu at close quarters and to serve and learn at their feet for almost two years. We had them to ourselves in that prison or detention camp, whereas outside Bapu was always too busy. Those of you who can read in Hindi, read my book '*Karavas Ki Kahani*' published by Sasta Sahitya Mandal, New Delhi. An English translation of it may be published later this year. The book gives you a vivid picture of our day to day life in that prison and a glimpse of Bapu's mind at that time. As some of you might be knowing, Mahadev Desai who was Gandhiji's Secretary for 25 years and was like a son to him died 6 days after his arrest on the 9th of August, 1942, along with Bapu and Miraben the British Admiral's daughter, who became his disciple. Bapu undertook a 21 days fast in February 1943 which almost killed him. Kasturba's health started failing soon after that and she died on 22nd February 1944, thus we had to face a great deal of stress and strain and sorrow in she detention camp.

In the midst of tragedy, however, we did have some fun. Gandhiji made us observe 26th January as the Independence day in 1943 as also in 1944 when he administered the Independence pledge to us. We had to have a flag hoisting and sing 'Vande Matram' in the right tune. We observed Bapu's birth day on the 2nd October in 1942 and 1943. Gandhi made each one of us chalk out a course of studies for seven years. He was mentally prepared for losing everyone in the detention camp. So that in case none of us came out alive, our people outside would know how we lived, what we thought and talked in the detention camp.

It was most inspiring to see how Bapu served Ba during her last illness. He insisted on ministering to her smallest needs and washing her spittoon.

He reminded us of the Parsi New Year as our jailor was a Parsi and Dr. Gilder, another Parsi joined us during Bapu's 21 days fast, and to observe it befittingly. He remembered the birthday of Mrs. Naidu's daughter Padmaja and asked me to prepare Khadi handkerchieves with her initials in different language

embroidered in a corner, one of which he did himself, to be sent to her as a birthday present. He gave me lessons in Sanskrit and made me study English grammar and the New testament, which he considered essential for mastery over the English language, as Sanskrit is for learning Indian languages. He could spend hours in determining the exact meaning of a word. I remember the time we had in finding out the exact Gujarati equivalent for word 'theological'.

Gandhi had frequent important correspondence with the government which he used as a means of educating each one of us. He would give the draft and ask everyone to study it and bring to him his or her observations and suggestions. He was most particular about punctuality which he considered essential for the practice of non-violence.

After our release from the Aga Khan Palace Detention Camp in May 1944, Hindu-Muslim riots and the partition of India made him very sad and depressed. I asked him one day "Bapu you have often said that at heart you are a social reformer. You took to politics because independence, you felt, was essential for social reform. Now that India is free, will you concentrate on social reform". He looked at me with sad eyes "You say India is free, Where is that freedom" he asked. Then he added, "If I survive the flames that surround me, my first task will be to reform politics".

He was preparing to go to Pakistan on February 9th taking with him the Hindus and the Sikhs who had come from there and to come back with the Muslims, who had left India. But that was not to be. He fell to the assassin's bullet on 30th January, 1948 on his way to the evening prayer, with God's name on his lips. He sent me on a mission to Pakistan four days earlier. On the plane from Lahore to Delhi, on the morning of 31st January 1948, next to me sat Main Iitikharuddin, a Muslim League leader. With tears in his eyes, he said to me "Sushilaji the assassin of Bapu is not merely the man who pulled the trigger, but each one of us who ever doubted his word is responsible for his murder". Bapu's nonviolence was changing hearts even after his death.

Gandhiji's assassination shook the whole world. Nehru sobbed "The light has gone out and there is darkness every-where" Then he pulled himself together and added, no he was wrong, the light that Gandhiji had shed was no ordinary light. It would continue to shine for a million years.

The chairman of the U.N. Kashmir commission Dr. Egbert Graaffe said, "It is impossible to think of him as dead. In a remarkable flash of foresight, he once referred to the possibility of being shot, and he said whoever would kill him, would not kill the real Gandhi and indeed Mahatma was right. The real Gandhi lives and will always be cherished not only in every Indian heart but the heart of the world". The world is once again turning to Gandhi. Let us India realise the value of the great heritage that he left us, and try to become worthy of it.

At Sabarmati

It was on the 26th May, 1929 I first entered the Satyagraha Ashram at Sabarmati along with Gandhiji. Here are a few memories of the days. I spent under his care till he started on the Dandi March next year.

He liked to sleep under the sky, unless it was actually raining. The other inmates of the ashram, who lived near him generally liked to sleep in the open, but in the chilly winter they took shelter of the roof and shifted their beds to the verandah. But, he never flinched. There lay his cot in the open, in winter as well as in summer. I followed suit, and placed my cot outside at a respectable distance from his. He would often bid me good night with his favourite saying, now sleep, of the innocent.

There was *Parijat* tree in front of his residence at the ashram which was known as *Hridayakunj* (i.e. the Power of the Heart). In the rainy days of July and August the tree put forth all its floral glory. Early morning one day, I gathered all the delicate, fragrant red-white flowers with which the ground had been strewn overnight move them into a garland, put it into a basket, and covering it with the upper skirt of my sari, approached Gandhiji as he sat writing in his room.

"Mahatmaji, may I garland you?" I asked with some hesitation. He looked up. "Why, is there any special occasion today?" He asked?"

"Today is grand holiday", I playfully replied. "I have gathered theses lovely flowers of *Parijat* from the garden, and made a garland for you?"

"Where is it?"

"Here!" I showed the garland to him.

"Very fine! Now do this much for me. There are two patients in the ashram. When you have the satisfaction of garlanding me take the garland at once, cut it into two pieces, give one each to both the patients, and let me know afterwards how they fare. Do you agree?"

"I do," I said, and carried out his instructions.

Once there was a sport competition on the ashram grounds between students of the Gujarat Vidyapith and those of the ashram. The latter were beaten by a small margin. Gandhiji was present on the occasion for nearly an hour and a half. At the end of the match all the players gathered round him and asked him to say something to them. "I would say only this," said Gandhiji, that the defeated party should not be disheartened, and the victorious one should not feel elated". The remark was hailed with joy and laughter.

A month or so before the Dandi March in 1930, a small pox epidemic broke out in the ashram. Gandhiji was opposed to vaccination, and patients in the ashram had got their children vaccinated in deference to his opinion. When the epidemic

broke out some children got severe attack. Gandhiji took a possible preventive and curative measures which were approved of by competent doctors. Many of the patients were cured, but a few succumbed.

Gita was a girl of nine. Her soul filtered away while she was listening to her father who was reading *Gita* at her bedside.

That night at 12, I suddenly got up. Gandhiji was sitting in his bed and was writing letters. The lantern was burning.

"Why are you writing at such an odd hour? Is something very important? May I help you?" I asked him.

"No, you may sleep on. Let me go on writing", he replied without turning head.

I had no alternative but to sleep again. That night passed on. A few days later, it was little Vasant's turn. He passed away while his father, Pandit Narayan Khare, was conducting the evening prayer of the ashram.

And again when tiny Meghji followed suit, some days later and as before, I saw Gandhiji burning the midnight oil. I could not keep to my bed, but got up, and approaching him straight away asked. "Mahatmaji, why do you get so much disturbed on the night of these deaths? Every time a child passes away you get up at dead of night and bury in writing!".

"What else can I do? He replied with a sigh. I can't sleep. These Kiddies are fading away like little buds. I feel the weight of their deaths on my shoulders. I prevailed upon their parents not to get them vaccinated. Now the children are passing away. It may be, I am afraid, the result of my ignorance and obstinacy; and so I feel very unhappy.

"Is it the Mahatma who is uttering these words?" I said with a taunt. You have made the correct diagnosis. You have applied correct remedies. Doctors have approved of your method of dealing with the disease. Now, no one can resist death if after all children die, who can he? But, why should you, of all persons-you who always teach us to look to death as a friend and act in a dispassionate manner-should your heart be so weak as that?"

"True", replied, "I admit my weakness". He mused for a few seconds, then looked up, and said "However brave and dispassionate a man may be, can he not be tender-hearted as well?".

Next evening, he poured out his heart before the ashramite and declared that, while he himself had no faith in vaccination, he did not wish to impose his opinion on others. If any parents wished to get their children vaccinated, he added, they were free to do so.

No one availed of this liberty, and after that day there was no fatal case in the ashram.

It was a strict rule at the ashram that after 9 p.m., there should be quiet everywhere and lamps would be put off. Talking after 9 p.m. was prohibited. Occasionally, however, I saw Gandhiji himself breaking the rule. Mirabehn came to bid him good night, and at times Gandhiji talked to her for several minutes, even beyond the prescribed time limit. No one dared to speak about this or to give a timely hint to either of them. One night I heard a sister, who was my neighbour, talking loudly to a guest of her's after the bell was gone. When I drew her attention to the fact, she expressed her regrets, stopped the conversation, and went to bed. I then left my room and came to the compound to go to bed, when-to and behold! - there lay Gandhiji on his cot, talking to Mirabehn who was standing in front of him!

"Mahatmaji, the bell gone," I told him.

"As is it? I had no ideal" he exclaimed.

"Can a satyagrahi be so negligent?" I said,

"-Behn too was chatting just now, when I had to pull her up".

"She ought not to have done so" he said.

"And what are you doing?" I asked, and added: "When you break the rule, others follow suit".

If I break the rule, you must pull me by the ear and bring me to my senses, he said quietly. "I too must obey the rules, for my responsibility of abiding by them is greater than that of anyone else".

He at once put an end to the conversation and went to sleep.

SOCIAL LIFE - GROUP LIFE

Aristotle defined man as a social animal. Man appears from the society, lives in it and disappears in society. Society is the result of physical and psychological relationship among human beings. Society is the web of relations. The individual and the society are inseparable from each other. Social life is an important part in the life of man. Social life of man consists of different small and big groups. The basic unit and the smallest group is the family and biggest unit is the society in the whole of mankind.

An individual is a unit of society and he first feels the presence of the society within a group and in a way the group is the unit of society. For an individual, the group and the society merge into one at one point or the other or at one time or other. Indeed the individual's very existence weaves the fabrics of the group of the society. Prof. Cooley states this idea as follows: "A separate individual is an abstraction unknown to experience and so is a society, when regarded as something apart from individuals. The real thing is human life, which may be considered either in an individual aspect or in a social aspect; but it is always, as a matter of fact both individual and general". In other words, society and individual do not denote separate phenomena, but are simply collective and distributive aspect of the same thing. One approach regards society as a system

of contracts between the individuals, who constitute it and the other approach regards society, as a greater organism, somewhat on the lines of the biological system of the human body. Further, we find that groups and individuals are interactive and not form contradictory parts, since groups are by and large psychological units. The relationship of man, as an individual, with the society in general is more profound, more subtle, lasting and all embracing. To quote Maciver and Page, "Society is more than a necessary environment, more than the soil which we are nurtured. Our relations to the social heritage are more intimate than that of the seed to the earth in which it grows..... Society both liberates and limits our potentialities as individuals not only by affording definite opportunities and stimulations, not only by placing on us definite restraints and interferences, but also subtly and imperceptibly, moulding our attitudes, our beliefs, our morals and our ideals".

Social thinkers direct the society towards the ideal social orders. Gandhiji aimed towards the sarvodaya order. This he called it as Ramarajyam, which is based upon love and truth. Ramarajya of Gandhiji is stateless, classless and casteless society. Gandhian ideal society is based upon co-operation and decentralisation. All kinds of centralisation are dangerous according to Gandhiji. Especially in politics-which is the institution of power, we need de-centralisation. Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. The minimum Politics, rules and regulations are better. Gandhiji wished to free men from all kinds of bondage. When man's qualities are channalised, be the social institutions, his freedom is in danger. He is not free to express himself fully and always he must make compromise with the society. So Gandhiji always aims from an open society in which man can live like angels without disturbing the others and without disturbed by other members. The Indian way of life and thought seems to be specially suited to the deepening of personality that draws its impulse and urge from within, and is always trying to discover the essence of things. The group life was not neglected by the Indian thinkers. The last phase of man's life is full of socio-spiritual responsibilities.

Group Life and its Essential Features

In order to fulfil his needs, man necessarily requires the co-operation of others and so social life becomes a necessary part of his life to fulfil his needs, through the medium of social life. Besides this unity of interests is another important reason for the social life of man and these interests may be (1) Like interests (2) Common interests and groups are formed due to the common interests. Maciver and page define social group as follows: "By group we mean collection of human beings, who are brought into social relationships with one another". R.M.Williams tells us that a social group is given aggregate of people playing inter-related roles and recognised by themselves or others as a unit of interaction. We have two kinds, of-groups. Primary Groups and Secondary Groups. In primary group, we have face to face, strong and co-operative relations among the persons such as a family. On the other hand, in secondary groups, such strong, personal and warm relations are not found such as political groups and company groups. The most essential features of a group life are:

- 1) The members are related to each other-social relations in reciprocal communication.
- 2) Group implies a feeling of unity. By virtue of such feeling, they treat each other as their own and a sense of sympathy and good will develops among them.
- 3) They have a sense "we" feeling by virtue of which they help each other in their duties.
- 4) The interests of group members are common.
- 5) There is similarity of behaviour in a group. Since the interests, ideals and values are common, the behaviour of the persons also tends to be similar.
- 6) Control of group over the actions of the members. In each group there are some customs, norms and procedures which are acceptable to everyone and everybody has to obey the social norms.
- 7) The members of the group are affected by group characteristics.
- 8) There are common values in the group. The social values are common and they are traditionally respected.
- 9) There are mutual obligations. The relationships between the members of the social group are further strengthened through their mutual obligations.
- 10) There are mutual expectations. In a social group, the members are entitled to sympathy, affection and Co-operation from the other members. The family, as a social group can serve to illustrate all the above essential features of group life. Social organization of the organizations is dependent upon the integration or disintegration of social groups.

Human as a Culture-making Animal in Group Life

Human appeared on this planet some four million years ago and at that time he was living in tune with nature. Group life is much older than humankind since we find the same; in; the world of other living beings. Two important institutions were developed with us and they are the family and the small community life or group life. Biologically, man is a social creature, since his throat and mouth are formed for delicately modulated speech and that unique faculty of speech is a remarkable trait of social life and not of solitary animals. He does not lead the life of Robinson Crusoe, the solitary traveller on a solitary Island. So, he is rightly called a social and rational being and he is also a community animal and this idea that man is a small-community animal is supported by social anthropologist. Indeed! Men are biologically and psychologically adjusted to community life and social life. Above all, as Mark Grawhard declared, "Man is a culture-making animal". Had Linnacus lived today, he probably would have named the human species as homo-cultarans rather than homo-sapiens. We find that man's unique weapon, as well as his most puzzling and remarkable trait is culture-making. Man's social behaviour and universal and apparently inmate in man. The familiar relations of favourable conditions for the development of fundamental human culture. In short, men almost never choose to live in isolated form houses and there are constant tendencies to abandon isolated homes and the natural community impulses find expression by development of community life and the

members know each other and work together for their common ends in a spirit of unity friendship and progress.

Author E. Morgan's observatories are as follows: "Most characteristically human or human equalisation are products of small community life. Man is definitely a small community animal. A normal small community is not just a collection of persons living closely together and having some activities in common. It is a living, vital social organism with a life and character of its own". To maintain human integrity and harmony against the overwhelming mass and burdens of our own creations in modern times, is to insist on human values and the primary place of small community life and primary patterns of good progressive group life based so truth, nonviolence, tolerance and understanding and respect for human dignity; and personality.

Gandhiji wanted change but change without bloodshed. He was a fighter without bloodshed. Gandhiji wanted India to be a land of milk and honey but not of liquor and luxury. Gandhiji was a great lover of traditional India. In the ancient Indian system, man's life was so designed that the man becomes spiritual and social simultaneously. The *sanyasi* is the man of the world and the whole world is his family. All the living beings are related with him. Simple life and higher thinking is the ideal for the Indians. Gandhiji once said, "My simple living harmonized my inward and outward life was certainly more truthful and my soul and harmonious development of human personality in all its five factors, physical, intellectual, aesthetical, ethical and spiritual. The object of life can be attained by conscious efforts in the right and complete being. To make life happy, one has to drink the brimming cup of life to the full and to the end.

Mahatma Gandhiji is for Lokaniti, which is a comprehensive term, which denotes simultaneously a way of life, a form of social order and a method. As a way of life it stands for self-regulation of individual conduct and for a habit to act on one's own imitative. As a form of social order, it envisages a society in which politics and military will have little to do, and the law will interfere the least with life. Gandhiji had deep faith in the goodness of man's nature, inspite of the existence of evil because he accepted that it was possible to realize the triumph of divinity. Man has physical, social, political, economic and intellectual aspects but none of them exhausts his confines and possibilities. He is essentially a spirit. The spirit provides unity to the different phases of his existence and hence a complete psycho-spiritual solution is needed. But this is dependent upon; the energization of moral sensibilities and feelings and hence the stress should always be on the moral and spiritual aspects rather than on the intellectual, the scientific and the institutional.

Gandhiji had immense faith in man. There was no anti-thesis between his humanism and his belief in divine providence. He said, "My faith is in God and therefore in the people". God is organically bound up with mankind and with all living beings. Hence, love for man leads to the realization of God. His humanism inspired his service to the sick and the suffering. He derived satisfaction from affectionate service and ministration to the victims of diseases. There were others in the ashram, who would have been glad to take care of the sick but Gandhi's

humility was so deep that he would personally take care of them. Furthermore, to the suffering Indians, he brought a message of love, hope and kindness. Gandhiji's purpose in life was the realization of truth which is possible through non-violence. The practice of non-violence is meaningful only in society Gandhiji does not like to renounce the world for spirituality. He emphasized the constructive programmes to promote the group life. People who surrounded him thought that he was not in politics but in social reform. Really, constructive programmes are the part and parcel for freedom movement. Gandhiji accepted the ancient Hindu classification. Varnashrama Dharma but he never accepted the hierarchy in varnas. He was a reformer but not one who rejects one's own tradition. He once declared "I am a reformer through and through, but my zeal never leads me to the rejection of any of the essential things of Hinduism" (*Young India*: October 1921).

Among the constructive programmes he emphasised firstly the religious unity-the Hindu-Muslim unity. Upto the last breath he was for religious integration. As a true seeker after Truth, he never found any religion alien to him. He strongly believed and lived a life that is based upon the oneness of religions. Another constructive programme of Gandhiji is the removal of untouchability. Untouchability is the greatest sin in Hinduism. When all human beings are considered as children of God, the way of untouchability is based upon ignorance and arrogance. From his early days onwards, Gandhiji was against untouchability. When he set up the ashrams he invited the poor untouchables to live with him. Because of this he faced problems from the members of the ashrams. Kasturiba herself objected this act of Gandhi. But, as a man of truth and nonviolence Gandhiji enlightened them about the sin of untouchability.

To Gandhiji society is just like a family and therefore individual and society, are closely related with each other. For this reason though he fought for individual freedom, yet he does not ignore social obligations. He says, "I value individual freedom but you must not forget that man is essentially a social being. He has risen to the present status by learning to adjust his individualism. Individualism is the law of the beast of the jungle. We have learnt to strike the means between individual freedom and social restraint for the sake of the well being of the whole society of which one is a member". (*Harijan*, May 27, 1939 p, 144).

Gandhiji believed in the theory of continuous evolution of society. According to him, man's habits which are sometimes called his second nature, are subject to change. Moreover through habitation processes good habits and correct behaviour patterns can be formed. There are certain factors which help society in its evolution and may prove to be great accelerators of social change. There are (1) Science and technology, (2) Education, (3) Democracy and (4) the spirit of equalitarianism. Through these factors the change process of the society can be expatiated.

In this interesting book, *A Revolutionary's Quest*, Jayaprakash Narayan observes, "Man always lives in organic relationships with other men and it is the totality of these living relationships that constitutes society". According to him the problem of present day civilization is social integration. Since man is an "Organization man", he is ordered about and manipulated by forces beyond his

vision and control. In schools and colleges, the problem is to recreate the human community and in the true community or in Group life, there is identity of interests and a feeling of unity in the midst of diversity and a sense of freedom within the framework of accepted social responsibilities. Differentiation of functions converge to the single goal of the good of the community or group life which unites all the individuals and harmonizes all their interests. In the village republics of Gandhiji's dreams, there will be perfect democracy and the law of nonviolence rules the group life and the village panchayatraj. Writing in the *Harijan*, dated 27th May 1939, Gandhiji declared as follows, "I value individual freedom, but we must not forget that man is essentially a social being. He has risen to the present status by learning to adjust his individualism to the requirements of social life and progress. Unrestricted individualism is the law of the beast of the jungle. We have learnt to strike the mean between individual freedom and social restraint. Willing submission to social restraints for the sake of well-being of the whole society, enriches both the individual and the society of which one is a member". In Gandhiji's opinion, we must keep our wants to; the minimum and put an end to our desires to amass wealth and material possessions. We must practise co-operation based on proper understanding and toleration, making truth and nonviolence as the cardinal rules of our conduct and relationships with others. As men find self-expression and self-realization through creative principles, they should adopt the same as dynamic forces of human relationships in group life.

There is a valid concept of progress—progress towards good things of life. Every individual and society can attain progress by consciously directing its energies towards the accomplishment of what is desirable. By constant practice and dispassion an individual can change himself and improve his personality and channelise it toward what is desirable. Hence, it is absolutely necessary that for the progress and growth of the society, the theory of determinism should give place or be supplemented by the theory of conscious direction.

Mahatma Gandhi expressed his views on the social institutions. His approach to these institutions is not like the theoretician but like a practical spiritualist. He was not a spiritualist who negates the group life. The group expresses itself through the family, community, association, institution, government, state etc., These social institutions help an individual to behave like human being. The socialization process is possible only by these social institutions.

Society, thus provides an environment or a structure under which the individual grows. Gandhiji believed in growth unceasing and uninterrupted growth, life long perpetual growth, that ends only with death. Such a steady, natural and normal growth is the duty and destiny of every child that is born.

Gandhiji wished to change the individual as well as society. Real and revolution is the aim of Gandhiji. The individual's mind and heart must be changed towards goodness, truth and beauty. For this, the social institutions must also help the individual. Gandhiji found out new institutions when the old institutions lost their meaning and purpose. In education, he conducted many experiments and found out the basic education is the proper education for the mankind. In family, he stressed the importance of the equality of women and

brahmacharya as way of life for both men and women. In politics he preferred the decentralized and participatory government. In economics, he introduced the swadeshi and self reliance doctrine. In religion, he aimed for the unity of religions. In all these institutions, Gandhiji conducted many experiments.

Community Ethics and Social Unity

Any critical study of social life and community life will be incomplete and imperfect without any reference to community ethics since there is moral or ethical activity from cradle to grave, from birth to death. Further, moral activity does not take place in any vacuum, but takes place in the community or in the society. We find that ethical standards originated in primitive community life, since people living together intimately in small social groups found it necessary to be considerate and tolerant and kind towards each other and in the general welfare of the group or the community. Even in the primitive social groups, ethical codes or standards were thoroughly understood and agreed upon and were generally observed. In case of extreme violations of ethical codes, definite penalties were enforced and general public disapproval of such violations was strictly followed. It is interesting to note that ethical standards originated in efforts to define relationship for successful social life and it is very remarkable that the moral habits of primitive people were of a very high order and some of the codes that prevailed among the remote Eskimos compare favourably with the best standards of civilized people, as exemplified in the Christian codes and recorded in the 'Sermon on the Mount'. Throughout the human history, we find that the strongest influence towards social unity has been common on the ethical understanding and practice of the same in social life. The wide spread acceptance of the "Ten Commandments" provide a common body of ethical principles and a powerful social disciplines. Community moral standards must be looked upon as guides to conduct rather than as inflexible rules and standards and the small community is the best place for stabilizing and transmitting the finest ethical standards. Any living and dynamic code of morals must express itself in action and we declare that a good man is one, who instead of preaching good deeds to others, does actually perform good deeds and thus sets a good example to others. In every modern community, there are inequalities, discriminations and social conflicts, which prevent social unity and disrupt the group life or community life. In such cases, removal of social conflicts and tension by nonviolent and peaceful methods of resolution of such conflicts by negotiations based on truth and nonviolence, good will and understanding will certainly lead to the progress and prosperity of the community and stability of social Unity.

Mahatma Gandhi stood for community life. Family and Community life are the two corner stones of human life. Family and community should ultimately include the entire globe and finally should embrace the whole universe. Such a movement is part of Gandhi's pilgrimage towards Absolute Truth which is an unending and continuous quest. The British colonised India and Gandhi's struggle was to remove the British colonial rule from India. But he never hated the British. He loved the English people and he loved the Indians. This was possible because he could realize that we are all the children of God, and we are all part of one another. Love and equality, reverence and respect for others and their views and humility are the necessary conditions for successful group and human relationship.

Mahatma Gandhi was a revolutionary. No philosopher had the courage to proclaim the concept of welfare of all. Marx who stood for the welfare of the masses, advocated the elimination of a few (haves) for the sake of others. Though Jesus Christ wanted to forgive the enemies and sinners, Christianity accepted the concept of eternal hell to punish the sinner. Prophet Mohammad supported the concept of holy war to punish and defeat the sinners. He himself set up examples. Many great men took up only such a position. But Gandhi firmly believed that everyone should be for the welfare of the last person. His whole life is an excellent exposition of his concepts. He never hated any one English man or otherwise, lived with untouchables nursed the leper and was kind to those who planned to kill him. For him top ranking statesmen, prime ministers, presidents and kings and lepers and untouchables were the same. He showed the same kindness and care to each one of them.

In the Nuclear Age, Gandhian insight has become meaningful. Can we have disarmament leaving one nation or group aside. That would be an end to humanity. In this context, one can realize the significance of every nation or group. For Gandhi social as well as group life is as basic as breathing. Relationship is life and isolation means death. From this it also follows social change has to come through non-violent action or verbal persuasion, legal and institutional action and not by violent action. Violent action and social and group life are contradictory terms.

A few incidents from the life of Gandhiji are quoted here from Kakasaheb Kalelkar.

Idea of Service

I was in Shanti Niketan when Babu returned from South Africa viz England. I had gone there with the idea of studying the institutions and their atmosphere at close quarters and thought the best way to do so would be to work there as an honorary teacher for a few months. It was typical of Ravibabu's great hearted generosity that he gave me the chance.

Those inmates of Babu's Ashram in Phoenix, South Africa, who had elected to return to Bhart with Babu, had gone to stay at Shanti Niketan as guests, to await his arrival from England, Babu had sent them along to Mr. Andrews when he himself left to South Africa. Mr. Andrews kept them in Mahatma Munshiram's Gurukul, Hardwar, for a while, and then in Shanti Niketan.

From newspapers I knew the history of our people in South Africa. A friend had told me about Babuji's South African Ashram. It is probable that the ashramites, too, had heard of me through the same source. The moment I set foot in Shantiniketan, I became more or less part of Phoenix group. I joined their morning and evening prayers, and had my evening meal with them. These ashramites made it a point to do an hour's hard labour every morning before breakfast. The Shantiniketan people had therefore given them a job or work to do. There was a pond not far from the shantiniketan and a mound nearby. The job consisted of digging up the mound and dumping the earth into the pond, with the object of filling up the latter. I have no idea how long ten or twenty men

would have taken to finish this task at the rate of one hour's digging and dumping a day. However, we were not concerned with the results, but merely with the labour. We went at it every morning with unabated zeal and clock-work regularly. Mr. Pearson joined us in this work.

When Bapu came to Shantiniketan--I will give an account of his arrival elsewhere-- we set up talking with him till late into the night. Next morning, after saying our prayers off we went as usual to our labours. When we returned, behold! there was our breakfast fruit etc., all nicely cut and distributed in this ready for us! Who had done this motherly thing for us while we were away on our daily task? I asked Bapu (those days I spoke to him only in English): "Who on earth has done all this?" He answered; "I did it. Why?" I said in a rather embarrassed way: But why did you do it? It does not seem right, somehow; that you should take all this trouble for us, and we should just sit and eat." "But why? What does it matter?", he asked. I said: "we must deserve to be served by people like you".

Babu's answers to this took me completely by surprise When I said: "That is a fact!" I just started at him bewildered. He laughed and added: "You had gone away to work and having breakfasted, you will go off to work again. I had sometime to spare so I saved you yours. You have acquired sufficient merit by your hour's hard labour to deserve a breakfast like this; have you not?".

I had meant something quite different, when I had observed that "we must deserve it". My point was that we had not yet acquired sufficient merit to deserve such service from such a great man. But that meaning, of course, never occurred to him; To him, all were alike and equal, I had given of my services, so had a claim on his:

Kallenbach's Conversion

Everybody who has read Gandhiji's Satyagraha in South Africa will remember, how he was beaten upon by Pathans in South Africa and left for dead; and how on regaining consciousness his first words were to this effect: "My assailants must not be punished. I forgive them freely".

After that day, Bapu's great and faithful friend, Mr. Kallenbach never allowed Bapu to go anywhere alone and unattended. Kallenbach was a tall well-built and powerful man, an adept at wrestling and boxing, and in all the arts of attack and defence. Wherever Bapu went, there also went his faithful body guard, Kallenbach.

One day, Bapu was going to a meeting. It came to kallenbach's ears that the whites were planning an attack on Bapu, and he slipped a revolver into his hi-pocket, just in case of trouble. When Bapu learnt this, he was greatly annoyed. "Throw your revolver away" he ordered, "Is your trust in God or in that revolver?. Actually, there is no need whatever for you to come with me, I need no protection. Am I not safe in God's hands? So long as he desires to take work from me, his is sure to keep me safe".

Late on, there was an incident (related to me by Maganlabha Gandhi) which might be regarded as a sequel to the one I have related above.

The whites were holding a meeting which Kallenbach went to attend. He was standing on the fringe of the crowd. He got involved in a discussion, and then fell out violently with someone there. An Englishman, loves a fight. Whether his arms be flabby or muscular, his sleeves, so to speak, are always rolled up! "Come along!" Rewarded that particular Englishman to Kallenbach "Come along! Let's fight it out!" One can imagine what must have happened then. Kallenbach, tall and powerful, wrestler, boxer and fighter, challenged publicly to a fight! He must have stiffened, his face rushed and hardened, and his eyes glittered And then, one can imagine how a sudden memory must have brought a revolution; how his body must have relaxed, his hand unclefted, and the light of battle died out from his eyes as he said calmly: "But I am not going to fight you!",

Think of it! A well known fighter like Kallenbach refusing a public challenge! Not even a coward would have dared to do it! Kallenbach's refusal electrified all who heard it.

One wonders how many there were in that crowd who had the insight to realize the courage it must have taken to behave thus, like a 'coward'!

The Human Touch

Bapu's second son, Manilal, married at a later age than the other sons. He lived in South Africa, but he wanted a girl from Bharat. Manilal had entrusted Bapu with the task of finding him a wife. Jamnalalji (Bajaji) being deeply interested in all Bapu's affairs, great and small, found a girl in the Mashruwala family, who seemed suitable. Her name was Susila, and she was the daughter of Nanabhai Mashruwala of Akola. Babu expressed immediate approval of Jamnalalji's choice. The wedding took place with due ceremony in Akola, and the Gandhiji family started off homewards. As soon as they reached the station, Bapu said laughingly "Mamilal do not sit in our compartment. Find your own place, and take Susila along with you, Do not miss this fine opportunity of getting to know each other a bit".

Bapuji returned to Ashram and at the prayer time he told us all about the wedding.

Dakshina for Harijans

We were in South Bharat, probably in Bangalore. Bapu sat in his room working. There was a steam of visitors, eager for a sight of him, coming and going. A gentleman, came along with a newly-wed couple, who were dressed even more richly than brides and grooms usually are; the gentleman presented them to Bapu, saying: "Mahatmaji, they have been married today, and they have come for your blessing". Bapu made them sit in front of him and said: "Blessings cannot be had for nothing, you know; Have you brought anything for Harijans as payment? You must have given lavish dakshinas (presents) to your purohits (priests). But have you given anything to the Harijans, and you shall have your blessing!

The innocent newly-weds were mute, as newly-weds must be. They just looked bewildered at the gentle-man who had brought them.

Then, said the gentleman, "Mahatmaji, what you say is quite right; but this young man is M.C. Raja's son, and this young lady his daughter-in-law"

M.C. Raja, Harijan himself, and chief leader of, the Harijans in the South!, what a joke! Bapu burst into a hearty laugh and said; "Oh then you are absolved from tax!"

I said to myself: "Yes, it is a joke! But, it must have convinced this young Harijan couple of Bapu's deep and abiding love for the Harijans"

Loving the Other

Jesus calls us to "love they neighbour". Here the "neighbour" is also the person near to us who is in distress or in need. In a Vedantic sense one has to love the "neighbour" since she/he is the manifestation of "God". History contains countless evidences of killing and torturing the other (neighbour). The other is differentiated on the basis of caste, class, language, gender, religion, ideology, nationality race, etc. This has done irreparable damage to humanity. Unless, this is stopped, humankind will have a major self-destruction. Mahatma Gandhi's beautiful ashram experiments is an adventure in co-operative living. This is a micro-level experiment which has far reaching consequences to the future of humanity. Ultimately humanity has to come together to live peacefully with justice, prosperity and love or has to slide down in the path of self-destruction.

Exercise

1. Discuss the Gandhian vision of family life.
2. Examine Gandhi's views on sexuality.
3. How did Gandhi care for the children, sick and aged?
4. Outline the Gandhian vision of communities.
5. Discuss the unique aspects of Gandhi's Ashram life.
6. How Gandhi nourished pluralism and diversities?

Application / Field Work

1. Try to undevoted and describe your current family life/community life. How you will enrich them.
2. How do you view children, sick and disabled?
3. Describe your experiences in a Ashram.
4. How do you respect pluralism and divinities in your life.
5. Encounter people of different faiths, languages, nationalities, races, ideologies, etc.

Lessons 7, 8 & 9

POLITICAL LIFE

Collective Decision Making and the Place of Consensus Spirit of Democracy - Swaraj and Co-operative Federalism Honesty and Transparency.

Gandhi went much beyond Western democracy which is then based on party-system, rule by representatives, centralization, simple majority and limited voting rights. Gandhi stood for decentralization, direct participation, consensus and accepting and celebrating honest difference and diversities. He was for swaraj (self-rule) at all levels from individual level, family, community and group..... to the global level along with co-operation and mutual aid and excluding exploitation, domination, inequality and injustice. These are not mere political principles but they need to pervade all aspects human life including the individual' life style.

The Concept of Majority in Democracy : An Appraisal

— Vasant Nargolkar

Over the last two or three centuries, democracy as a new form of government evolved first in England, and then in other countries of the West. India became independent in 1947 and the democratic Constitution of India was promulgated on the 26th January 1950. India happens to be largest democracy in the whole world today.

"May it be reserved to India," Gandhiji once said, "to evolve the true science of democracy by giving a visible demonstration." But it must be regretfully admitted that we Indians have not been able to fulfil Gandhiji's hope. Vinobaji and Jayaprakashji, two great leaders who enriched the Gandhian ideology and who led the Sarvodaya movement after Gandhiji, believed, with innumerable freedom-lovers in the world, that a democratic form of government is any way better than a monarchy, autocracy, aristocracy, plutocracy or dictatorship of any variety what so ever, including "the dictatorship of the proletariat" And yet they criticized the kind of representative government established in India after 1950, for it was a formal democracy fashioned after the Western model.

In ancient Greece, there were democratic city states. In India, on the other hand, even earlier than in Greece, village republics, that is, self-governing, rural communities, were in existence for centuries. Ancient India could boast of *ganatantas* (republics) of the Shakyas, the Lichchavis or the Yaudheyas. From very ancient times, there were gram panchayats also, which continued to function, until the advent of the British rule. There was direct democracy in these republics and gram panchayats, and they functioned, not in accordance with the rule of majority, but in accordance with the rule of unanimity, but it must be remembered that these self-governing units bear not comparison with the modern democracies with their multifarious functions and complex problem. Those units were very small and their functions were elementary.

During the course of its evolution in modern times, the concept of democracy has become rich in theory and has developed many connotations. The main postulate or assumption of modern democracy is that all men are created equal. Another is that people are the source of all political power, as they are sovereign. They must be governed with their consent, in accordance with an enacted constitution, law or well-established principles and conventions. In other words, there must be rule of law, People's consent can be ascertained and secured by votes in an election or a referendum. There must be adult franchise. There are some more similar assumptions of modern democracy.

But the crux of the whole problem of functioning of true democracy lies in its off-quoted definition given by Abraham Lincoln. Democracy, according to him, is to be a government "of the people, for the people and by the people".

Now, how is government by all the people possible at all? It was possible in ancient times in Greece or in India, because, as has been noted earlier here, those self-governing communities were very small in size and were compact. Participation by all the common people in collective deliberation, discussion and decision-making made direct democracy, practicable. Looking to the vast number of voters in modern democracies had to the complex nature of legislative and administrative work, direct democracy under the present circumstances is just impracticable and therefore, impossible. This necessitates delegation of power and authority by the people to their representatives, who are to be elected. Now again, how are the representatives to be elected? There are only two methods. One is by following the principle of unanimity and the other is by following the principle of majority. Those of the candidates who want to represent the people and who get a majority of the votes polled in any election become the people's representatives and then legislators.

It is again obvious that government by all the representatives of the people is equally an impracticable proposition. So the principle of delegation of authority and election of the "representatives of the representatives" by the rule of majority, becomes unavoidable. A council of ministers in any government represents the legislators elected by the voters at large. But they do not represent all the legislators. They represent only a part of the whole body of legislators.

For, another element enters this process of representation and, according to the advocates of partyless democracy like Vinobaji, Jayaprakashji and Gora of the Atheist Centre in Andhra Pradesh, it distorts the picture of representative government, right from the stage of 'primary' election. The institution of political parties, which we Indians have borrowed from the West along with other features of modern democracy has, in the opinion of Sarvodayites and of Radical Humanists, done more harm than good to the nation. A party, as the term itself reveals, represents only a "part" of the people. It is well known that during elections, the whole nation is treated for weeks to a flood of vile propaganda by leaders and candidates of opposing parties. Pious, upright, honest and conscientious men and women find party, and power, politics too dishonest and rough a game for their participation. The propaganda carried on by opposing candidates, party leaders and their activists is not only full of self-praise, but is also full of slander,

untruths, exaggerations, charge and counter charges of fraud, misappropriation, nepotism etc. against the opponents. Further, the use of bad and black money plays a big role in elections. Caste or religious appeals, bringing of voters, use of vehicles for free transportation of voters to booths, and such other immoral inducements, do not reflect correctly the exact nature of public opinion. The whole process adds up to "misrepresentation".

One more drawback of parliamentary democracy relates to the very topic of this paper. It is said that representative democracy ensures rule by majority. But is this so in actual practice? It is estimated that on an average, about 40 percent of the voters suffer from the discuss of "apathy" towards matters political. They just do not take the trouble to go to the polling booths to vote. Only about 60 per cent of the voters cast their votes, whether for this or that candidate. Thus a successful candidate, who secures a bare majority of the votes polled, gets only about 31 per cent of the total number of votes. The same rule operates at the higher levels of representative government. The decisions in the Parliament or the Assembly and in the meetings of the ruling party or in the cabinet are all taken by the rule of majority. Thus, as a result of the rule of majority it many a time happens that a small group of politicians or sometimes a single, strong-willed leader or a Prime Minister, decides questions of crucial importance to the society or nation.

But again what is the alternative? It must be remembered that no critic of the present, formal democracy, suggests that democracy as a form of representative government should be replaced by some other system. He only suggests that there is much room for improvement in the present, accepted form of parliamentary democracy. But is there any real, practical alternative to the rule of majority as it is used today right from the stage of election of people's representatives to the stage of decision of the cabinet? We know that even in the matter of dispensing justice at the highest judicial forum, the Supreme Court of India, the rule of majority view, attaches a note of dissent. If this is so, the advocates of the majority rule argue, how can we dispense with it in elections, in legislative bodies, in party meetings and in a meeting of the council of ministers?

The reply is, it is possible to replace the rule of majority by a rule of unanimity (which, in Sanskrit, would be called sarva-sammati), a rule of consensus (sarvanumati) or as a last resort by a rule of a majority, much higher than just 51 per cent against 49 per cent. It was Vinobaji who in India first suggested this improvement among many others, to make the present-day Western type of democracy, more ideal. This is not the place nor is there enough room here to discuss and describe all the major suggestion made by Gandhiji, Vinobaji, Jayaprakashji, Acharya Kripalani or Dada Dharmadhikari. Again it is not that only these leaders and thinkers of the Indian Sarvodaya movement have criticized the present formal parliamentary democracy harshly. Many Western thinkers like H.G. Wells, George Bernard Shaw, Harold Laski, Aldous Huxley, Lewis Mumford and Eric Fromm among many others, have also drawn the world's attention to the defects and drawbacks of formal democracy. So there is a universal need to undertake the task of suggesting and implementing suitable reforms.

The greatest need so far as bringing about an improvement in the type of parliamentary government that we have today is decentralisation of political and economic power in the country. If the gram panchayats, the zila Parishads and the state assemblies are entrusted with more and more self-government, many of the ills of the present system will automatically disappear. It is possible to follow the principle of unanimity in a village gathering, in a gramsabha, if only people are sufficiently educated politically. Sarva-sammata is complete unanimity, sarvanumati is consensus of agreement in spite of holding somewhat different view or opinions that of the majority. But decentralisation of political and economic power is a subject which touches the whole gamut of the present social, economic and political system prevailing in a country. One improvement in it can be easily given a trial and that is the adoption of the rule of unanimity or consensus at the lowest and basic levels of the political pyramid that is the Government of India.

Democracy and Consensus

— Harold Holloway
(A Quaker from Canada)

Democracy

There was a time, centuries ago, when citizens were thought of, and thought of themselves, as free men, as opposed to the definition of serfs, applicable to those forced to labour for their minimum sustenance-usually on the land of some large landowner. This freemen status automatically brought with responsibility, in a civic sense, for all that went on around them. They were freemen, not subject to the local baron, because they would get in union, unison; men who would, together, determine how life was to be organised delegation of those matters, to others was not to be considered.

However, as it became necessary to confer with other groups of citizens further away that was convenient for all to travel, a representative had to be appointed, at times, to state their case and from other towns or regions too.

For discussions with a king or ruler, feudal lords would assemble to consult. This consultation, and often confrontation, between king and barons of feudal lords, brought problems. With strong willed persons present, arguments and stalemates took up much of the King's time. He also wanted his way at times which caused under-currents of resistance.

The king took the bold step of opening up discussion of these problems with the group. It was agreed amongst them that if there was a majority in favour of something then the minority would accept that the majority were right. The concept of a majority of such delegates in favour of some point of view-the minority accepting the decision of the majority was eventually termed 'Democratic'.

In time the freedom of the towns wanted to have their say in things going on at the centre, so they had to select representatives who were allowed into the central body, and it worked reasonably well, always a different combination of

delegates forming a majority at any one time. In time the other sections of the population wanted to be involved in the election of representatives and when this took place the whole country being governed in this way became termed a 'Democracy'.

It was only in the nineteenth century that strong objections by women arose, demanding they each had a vote too. Some of them being very strong in their objections to "men only" being able to vote, that they suffered quite a lot and became known as "Suffragettes". eventually one of them, Elizabeth Fry, a Quaker, chained herself to the railings outside the Prime Minister's house until it was agreed women could have the vote.

Only when it was seen what a power the majority always had, that the idea of some permanent growing together of delegates with generally similar pints of view, came to fruition.

From which the party system grew-and in turn this created the need for a strong opposition, leading to a two party system, still called a Democracy, although a long way from the original idea. (A definition of "Democracy" might be - "A minimum of five parties, none of which can dominate the whole"). The power of two-party groups becomes an item in itself, attracting power-hungry individuals to be able to manipulate things for the well-being of the country- but this can be deviated, to manipulating things for the well-being of some groups or even for him/herself. Not always of course, there are good people also in the running, concerned for the well-being of the majority of persons.

There are also, always good points about things, which can be emphasised whilst the points in error, or disadvantageous points can be minimised. But the good points gradually get less, while the points in error increase. So the citizen has abdicated his/her responsibilities. Consequently individual freedom and effectiveness is reduced. (The other part-definition of "Democracy" might be all responsible individuals have opportunities to "have their say" in decisions made centrally).

Democracy has been demeaned from its original satisfactory stand of diverse representatives having no connection with one another, coming to agreement, even by voting amongst themselves, as to reduce to-absurdum, of two parties neither of which has anything very different from the other to offer the electorate, because the controlling influences which pay for the party expenses comes down from the same group each time, dictating the same hopes to be a balancing influence cannot bring in any new developments as the parties only wrangle over minor matters, or trying to prevent, from the opposition position, things occurring which if they were in power, they would do, because the same piper is calling the same tune.

All this comes from the citizens' abdication of responsibility, and handing over to "representatives" without responsibility, or with out responsible "Feed back."

Citizen's Responsibility through Democracy

If countries wish to call themselves democratic then they need to look at the definition of democracy again. Democracy is a system where a number of representatives, none of which are sufficiently influential to impinge their will upon the group, come to a decision by the minority accepting the majority opinion.

Another aspect which needs examination is that of the items which are going to have some decision mad about them.

There are decisions to be made about some major project, or operation, of creation of some-new organization, where once the decision is made the electorate are not concerned with putting it into practice; that is something which will be done by some number of experts and workers. Here the representatives must have knowledge of what their constituency generally thinks such a thing, and should vote that way.

When a decision has to be made about one thing, such as whether a bridge or a tunnel should be constructed at a river crossing, then it is made based on a majority vote.

Having created such a decision-making system this is not applied hap-hazard to all decisions, but there are other types of items about which decisions are needed but the individuals action might be left to the individual to decide, so that "in toto" the resultant would show how the electorate actually felt, not just how a representative voted. After all, the representatives were created because it was impossible for every person to vote individually on every decision him/herself. This overcomes the severe disadvantage of representatives, which is that they are individuals and can be pin-pointed to be subjected to pressure from influential sources. Which in effect means that whole blocks of votes are being swayed in direction preferred by one, two, or a few persons.

One way could be to give individual citizen the power to determine how their own taxes will be spent. The choice of selection of areas of spending to be on the tax return. The total to add up to the needed amount of tax.

Government departments would then have to express their needs and reasons for those needs to the electorate, and have ministers who could persuade the taxpayers to contribute sufficiently to his/her Department. That present Governments say they cannot work that way is no reason for not doing it. They must learn to cope with it. This would really be democratic.

It would then have to be agreed how other taxes or revenue, plus printed money, would be allocated. Either in proportion to the above resultant allocations or to be allocated by government decision as it done at present.

It will make things more difficult of the Government departments, but they must learn to cope with it. The allocation or distribution of spending of taxes be

taken out of the relatively few hands it is in at present, thus reducing the desire of money/power seeking individuals for such positions.

The corollary of this is the determination by the majority that everybody shall contribute taxes in a certain way, is lost.

Voting of Representatives

As with all voting arrangements, it seems correct if a large majority is in favour of something, that the minority should accept that the majority is most likely right and the minority should agree to the decision going that way. However when it comes to a close decision, that is there is only a very small difference in the voting numbers for and against, then ever such minor incidental things could have swayed the result one way or another, this seems invidious for such a "large" number in the minority, to have to accept that a very similar number, the majority, are correct.

Consensus

Consensus means no voting, everyone coming to see that one or other way of going about things is the correct way. This can only be achieved with discussion of the differences until there are no differences.

It is significant that a most quoted example of this type of decision making is not human but from the insect world - the honey-bee!

When a second queen appears in hive, if she survives, some of the worker bees will go and search for another site for a new hive. When they return they dance to indicate where the site is which they have found. There are about ten groups that have gone searching and each will indicate the location of the site they have found by a form of figure eight dance which points in that direction and the number of repeats of the figure eight gives an indication of the distance. Then the groups will go off again to look at all the sites found. On returning they will dance indicating which site they think best and the number might have reduced to five or six sites. The process is repeated resulting in the number of sites reducing to two or three. Again they all inspect the two or three sites indicated and finally when they all come back and dance indicating the same site, consensus has been reached and they will make ready to move to the selected site.

There is only one interest of all the bees in this process and that is to do the best they can for the survival of the whole new colony.

Would that humans would have the same one-pointedness for the survival of the human race in a bio-mass which has limited recovery capacity.

However, strong-willed persons who have "an axe to grind" may refuse to see logical arguments against them and stand out requiring decisions to go their way.

Then there is the overt consensus, often where a small group is involved and consensus appears to have been achieved. All say they are in agreement but in fact there can be subversive persuasion at work. Should anyone stand out against the strongest character in the group, they will literally suffer later, even first was only to the extent of showing they are reluctant to agree.

Families can be group of this nature when the father is dominant.

A compromise between the voting method which gives close numbers, and the consensus which cannot be achieved, might be to use the majority voting decision when there is a large majority, falling back on trying to come to consensus through discussion, when there is little difference in the numbers when voting initially. Then after discussion, perhaps voting again may be tried and perhaps a large difference would occur in numbers whence agreement that the small minority take the decision for the large majority as being correct, is accepted.

There is another form of consensus which has come into use by Quakers over the three/four hundred years of their existence. This however, is more deeply, spiritually based, than the socio-political type above.

To describe this form of consensus, it is necessary to look firstly at the "Meeting for Worship", central to the life of a quaker, which is held regularly by groups of quakers all over the world.

Here it is postulated that there is an indwelling spirit in all of us, and in silence in groups, that is Corporate silence, one can get back to this centre which is the Godhead, the centre from which all one's life springs. If one can get to that centre during "meeting", then often inspirational ministry will surface to the mind, which one feels it necessary to share with the group.

At times it may appear that different ministry is coming from different persons. But, before the meeting is over, some ministry will somehow link all the previous together into one whole and it is realised that all were on the same track after all, but in our limited human way we were on the same that until the linking inspiration was given.

How does that apply to consensus?

Well , an organisation as spread out as the Quakers, cannot exist with "meetings for worship" alone. There has to be a business side to things, so that are "meeting for business" also. In these there are numerous decision to be taken, and again, it is postulated that the spirit should guide, and if the spirit is guiding, then there will be only one way every-one getting back to the centre, will be guided. ~~Hence any who are not~~ seeing things in line with the majority are not truly getting back to the spirit, to the "Centre" from which all things spring.

Consequently there is no need to vote after discussion; the clear of the meeting, there is no other chair person, writes a minute to meet the requirements of the meeting as he/she is lead, or "see it". The Minute is read out there and

then and accepted in silence. If anyone has a serious objection then they may speak and the minute may be slightly re-written if the clerk senses that the spiritual leading and-or the meeting as a whole requires/agrees. Occasionally one member may stand out in all sincerity for a decision contrary to that agreed by all others, and at times such deep-seated concern by one member has brought the whole meeting to realise that there was more to the decision than they had seen, at first.

In extra-ordinary circumstances, where the meeting remains divided after full discussion, then the matter is adjourned to the next Meeting allow members time to mediate, ponder, call it what you will, for some time in their own privacy, on the matter, to return in due course for further consideration.

It is a little difficult to see how this type of Spiritual Leading decision making can be applied to socio-political gatherings of lay persons, unwilling to accept what that "still, small voice" within, may be trying to tell them.

There is a danger that consensus may be the domination of a powerful group. Equality, respect for others, decentralisation, unity with diversities, highly evolved vision of human rights, freedom and excellence, etc., are all necessary conditions for a group / nation / groups of nations to reach voluntarily a consensus.

Exercise

1. How did Gandhi make decisions?
2. What is "Swaraj".
3. How unanimous decisions which include the vision of everyone may be made?
4. Outline the honesty and transparency of Gandhi.

Application / Field Work

1. How did you make fundamental and day-to-day decisions. Can you improve this mechanism.
2. To what extent are you enjoying "Swaraj" in your personal and social life? How you will improve this situation.
3. Observe your own levels of honesty and transparency. How you will improve further in this.

Lessons : 10, 11 & 12

ECONOMIC LIFE : Material and Spiritual Life - Basic Needs and not Greed - Simplicity and Voluntary Poverty - Human Centred and Peace Economics - Beyond Consumerism - Self-reliance and Swadeshi - Trusteeship Mentality.

Overview

Mahatma Gandhi stressed holistic development. He rejected the tradition giving exclusive importance to ascetic and spiritual life pushing down the material life. He wanted the basic and honest material needs of everyone should be met. This requires a new world order. The existing order is based on exploitation, domination, over consumption, extravagance by a few nations and a few sections of humanity, wasteful and destructive use of rare resources and energy in a large scale, devastating mass poverty, unemployment and under employment, corrupt, unethical and violent economics. Gandhi visualized a new order (Ramarajyam-Kingdom of God - Sarvodaya Civilization) which would take facilitate the welfare of the last first and welfare of all persons ensuring holistic development at all levels.

Both capitalists, Marxists, socialists, fundamentalist feudalists and market systems tend to be short sighted paying attention only to a few sections of humanity and that too in the material and some aspects of intellectual development. In the material sphere they tend to multiply goods and services and always try to gratify the ever expanding greed. In the intellectual sphere they concentrated on those aspect of science and technology which increased their power and material wealth. They ignored the emotional dimension and were unaware of the spiritual and relationship dimensions. The long term aspects including the damage to environment are not taken into consideration.

Mahatma Gandhi wanted the balance growth of material, emotional, intellectual, spiritual and relationship dimensions. In this he comes much closer to Buddha. Aurobindo complained that Gandhi was giving too much emphasis on karma yoga ignoring other things. Of course Gandhi believed that our times needed more of karma yoga. He never ignored other dimensions.

Gandhi rejected poverty in total. But he wanted the upper strata to voluntarily adopt "poverty" as a *virata* for a particular purpose. This is a way to eliminate the 'poverty' of the poorer sections and to share one's excess with them. It is also a way to limit one's wants and pay attention to the other dimensions of life. It is also a symbolic way of sharing the difficulties of the poor. "Self-restraint" of the "powerful" is a key issue to Gandhi.

The New Economic Policy

or

The Recolonisation of India

– Koilpillai J. Charles

The New Economic Policy constitutes an important land-mark in India's economic history. Perhaps it may be more appropriate to call it a turning point. Obviously those who have been jubilant in their acceptance of this policy will not agree with the latter description. But even among those who have expressed strident opposition to this policy, there are many who do not see the New Economic policy as a turning point. To them it is the logical culmination of the industrial policy designed and firmly put in place by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. It would be hard to sustain such a claim.

The theoretical underpinning of the New Economic policy is provided by the recently resurrected version of the obsolete and long discredited theory of laissez fair according to which under the operation of the forces of the free market without state intervention, the pursuit of private profit will, guided by an "invisible hand" result in socially optimal distribution, of resources and production of goods and services. Nehru decisively rejected these facile claims about the magic of market forces. An economy wholly in the hands of private enterprise will result in three major drawbacks. (1) it will not bring about full employment or resources, (2) it will greatly accentuate inequalities of incomes and wealth resulting in rampant social injustice, and (3) it will almost certainly misdirect investment into areas of high profit to the neglect of socially important sectors. Nehru firmly believed that the injustices, imperfections and inefficiencies of the market forces should be constantly corrected by the "invisible hand" of the state. He assigned to the state three crucially important functions in the economy. (1) The state has to plan the development of the resources of the economy to ensure rapid growth and equitable distribution of incomes and wealth; (2) it has to control and correct the justices, imperfections and inefficiencies of the market forces; and (3) it has to be engaged in the production of goods and services of crucial and strategic significance to the economy and nation. A strong and enlightened state would be an effective bulwark against the vagaries, vacillations and tyrannies of market forces, and to set the economy firmly on the path of socialistic pattern of society. The Industrial Policy designed by Nehru placed the "commanding heights" of the economy under public ownership. It assigned to the state a pivotal role in bringing about economic development and social justice through the mechanism of ambitious and imaginatively drafted five year plans. The inflow of foreign capital was carefully controlled and permitted only in areas of social need, and in forms and amounts compatible with national interests and priorities. Self-reliance was a major plan of such a policy and elaborate precautions were taken to ensure that the crucial levers of the economy were at all times in domestic hand and within the orbit of the vigilant eye of the state.

This policy faithfully pursued by successive government, spanning the period from Nehru to Indira Gandhi, ensured that India stood foursquare against the neo-colonialism that were lustily blowing in the world, and before which other

nations were going down like nine-pins. Till about 1980 this policy was a runaway success, and was the envy of less fortunate nations. India had a comfortable foreign exchange reserve position and relied mainly on domestic resources for her development. Inflationary forces were firmly held in check. She bursued independent domestic and foreign policies and on more than one occasion majestically rejected policy advice preferred by the World Bank and the IMF in favour of dismantling controls and allowing greater play to market forces.

After 1980 all this changed, Rajiv. Gandhi believed that modern, front-line technology was the sure-fire remedy for all the ills of the Indian economy. The vision of a socialistic India that inspired his grandfather and mother, had little appeal to his flying jet-set life style, and technocratic outlook. He resolutely placed the socialist agenda on the back-burnet, in the firm belief that India should first modernise herself from the technological manna falling from the Western skies. Gradually self-reliance ceased to be a major policy objective, and India's import bills shot up, and she began to experience mounting foreign exchange problems taking her deeper and deeper into external debt. In the four years between 1985 and 1989, during which Rajiv Gandhi's economic liberalization drive was in full swing, foreign currency reserve fell by the order of 23 percent. In the last eight months of his Prime Ministership, as his administration sought to contain price increases by stepping up the imports of certain essential commodities, the foreign exchange situation got out of hand, foreign currency assets falling by an astounding 30 percent. When Manmohan Sigh assumed office in June 1991, foreign currency assets stood at \$1, 24 millions, barely sufficient to meet the country's import bill for three weeks.

In the light of the above it would not be inappropriate to say that the New Economic Policy was the logical culmination of forces set in motion by governments, both Congress and non-Congress, that immediately preceded the present government. But that would not absolve the present government of all blame for speeding with a vengeance in the direction in which the economy had been fitfully and willy-milly moving in the preceding period. Desperate emergencies, no doubt, require desperate remedies, but these could have been of short term nature, and resolute steps could have been taken after that to put the economy back on historic track to self-sufficiency and socialism. Lacking the courage, discipline and vision to lead the country back to its cherished and long held goals the present government has chosen to legitimize an accidental drift as a permanent and purposeful move towards turning India into a laissez faire economy.

(2)

Having considered the domestic circumstances that led to the establishment of the New Economic Policy, it is necessary to examine the world conjuncture to see how global forces have influenced events in India. It has become customary to refer collectively to the rich countries of the world as the 'North' and to the poor countries of world as the 'South'. During the decades of the sixties and the seventies, the countries of the 'South' registered some modest economic progress. In the early seventies the oil-exporting countries of the Middle East (OPEC) successfully managed to gain control over the prices of oil. This prompted other

countries of the South to create cartels in bauxite, tin and other raw materials as well as agricultural commodities. At the important conference on International economic Cooperation (CIEC) held in Paris in 1975, Southern governments expecting the backing of OPEC countries demanded from the North a comprehensive deal on a wide range of commodities, to mark the beginning of a "New International Economic Order" (NIEO). OPEC did not deliver, and the North somewhat alarmed at the prospect of a united and strong South: upsetting the established balance of economic power decided to cut countries of the South down to size. At present the North accounts for 20 percent of the world's population and the South for 80 percent. But the North consumes 80 percent of the world's resources, and the South has to content itself with the remaining 20 percent. The United States with a population of 5 percent of the world, consumes 30 percent of the world's resources. The rich countries thus have a command over the lion's share of the resources of the world, and they are willing to go to great lengths to protect their share. This is the ground reality of the extremely inequitable distribution of the world's resources.

The prospect of a United Southern Economic Bloc controlling strategic commodities and demanding favourable terms of trade in international commerce and regulating the inflow of foreign capital was not pleasing to the North. The major policy instruments in any strategy of the South to gain economic independence and strength were a leading role of the state in the economy, protection of domestic markets and control of foreign investments. The countries of the North in collision with the World Bank and the IMF decided to dismantle these control, and bring back the economics of the South under the subjugation of the North.

In the seventies the countries of the South had become indebted to the countries of the North and the World Bank and IMF. The major instrument employed to control the South was the "structural adjustment loan." The World Bank and the IMF would provide loans to enable the recipient countries to restructure their economies to conform to the laissez-faire model. The drastic program of liberalization required of these countries is the same that was later required of India, and is almost identical to the New Policy in all essential aspects. The structural adjustment program imposed by the World Bank on countries in need of loans and aid demands the following changes:

1. Elimination of barriers to imports.
2. Removal of restrictions of foreign investments.
3. Elimination of subsidies for local industries.
4. Devaluation of the national currency.
5. Reduction of spending for social welfare.
6. The gearing of production for exports rather than for domestic consumption.
7. Drastic reduction of government regulation of the economy.
8. Privatisation of state enterprises.

Then structural adjustment programs have worked with remarkable efficiency as mechanisms for the collection of interest and repayment of debt. Between 1984 and 1990, the net transfer of financial resources from the South to the North was of the order of the \$155 million. The ultimate objective of the north's strategy was to make the countries of the south subservient to the North, and open up the South for the products and capital of the North. Since the countries of Latin America and Africa succumbed to the pressures of the North much earlier than India, it is instructive to enquire as to how their economics have failed as a result of less development regulations and more inflow of foreign capital. From Argentina to Zambia the debt burden has shown no signs of decline. In Africa, average per capita income in 1990 was lower than it was in 1980. These countries are now more tightly integrated into world capitalism as subordinate members.

This has greatly facilitated the out-flow of capital from these regions to the North. The policies that Latin America has been forced to follow have drastically curtailed social welfare expenditures, and expenses on education and health resulting in much loss of life. In Africa famine stalks the land, and its dance of death and destruction takes a heavy toll of human lives. These countries have followed the World Bank-IMF blue-print for story, not one country that is out of debt, not one country that has registered a satisfactory economic performance. Can there be a greater indictment of the World Bank/IMF combine?

As shown earlier the New Economic Policy of India confirms closely to the policy measures required by the structural adjustment program of the World Bank. So India's New Economic Policy operates. It is becoming increasingly clear that multinational corporations and international financial institutions are assuming growing control over the Indian economy. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the recolonization of India has taken place. India fell victim to the rollback strategy of the North only in 1991 much later than most developing countries. Since India has long been a shining example of state led self-reliant economic development, and a leader of the Nonaligned movement, her subjugation by the North is a crowning achievement of its rollback strategy, as its tragic global significance is next only to the dis-mantling of socialism in the erst-while Soviet Union.

Multinational corporations are entering the Indian economy in a big way. Though aggressive and cunning advertisement and sales promotion their influence is spreading through the length and breath of India including the remotest villages. As a result keeping up with the International Joneses has become the preoccupation of our elite and middle classes and the craze for the goods and modern technology is taking deep roots in Indian soil. Most of the products produced by the multinationals are either unnecessary or harmful or more ominously they are displacing more efficiently produced cottage industry products. Examples of these are soft drinks, ice creams, chocolates, biscuits, toothpastes, soaps, detergents, washing machines, plastic products. In the drug industry, they are producing unessential and even harmful drugs, because their prices are not under public regulation, avoiding essential drugs subject to price control, More than 50 drugs banned in the developed countries are freely available in India, and some of them over the counter. Pervasive and repetitive advertisement especially

of TV is conditioning the masses of this country to turn to drugs on the on set of the slightest discomfort, succumbing to the alluring message that there is a "pill for every ill". Both because they elbow out products of small scale and cottage industries, often by unfair means and because they employ capital intensive technology, they are causing widespread unemployment in the country. Because the conditionalities of the World Bank and IMF require drastic curtailment of social welfare expenditures, poverty and inequalities are exacerbated and illiteracy and ill health are registering dramatic increases. Disease like cholera, T.B., and malaria which were in the process of being eliminated have now staged a come back with a vengeance.

Increased unemployment, poverty and growing inequalities have led to dramatic increases in crime, violence, terrorist activities and communal disturbances.

As befits a colony, India is being forced to follow economic policies not in her best interest, and in the political sphere her arm is constantly being twisted by the North, notably the United States to the American line. On pain of severe penalty India was recently forced to cancel a contract to sell rice to Cuba; other examples of India's loss of political independence abound.

As noted earlier, the New Economic Policy is identical in all essential aspects to the structural adjustment programme that is being rammed down the throats of countries of the South seeking World Bank/IMF loan or aid. The severest indictment of the World Bank/IMF combine is that not one country has prospered as a result of following these policies. Obviously the aim of these policies is to ensure that debts and interest chimes are regularly paid, and that doors of these economies are held open to the capital flows from the North. Also to maintain intact the present unjust distribution of the World's resources, as a result of which it has been estimated that annually some \$500 billion dollars flow from the poor South to the rich North.

(3)

What is to be done now?

1. If a lasting solution is to be found to the problems that bedevil the developing economies, the present world status quo which unjustly distributes global resources between the North and the South has to be drastically changed, and a New International Economic Order has to be established.

2. A sine qua non for this is that countries of the South should regain their lost economic and political independence.

3. Recognising that "divide and rule" policies have always been the stock-in-trade of imperialist powers at all times, imaginative and innovative measures along Gandhian lines should be put in place for resolving political problems and conflicts between nations of the South, peacefully without recourse to force.

Drastic cuts in the defence budgets of all countries of the South could then be collectively undertaken. This measure alone could reduce budget deficits in these countries, and could release resources for much needed expenditure on health, education and social welfare. It will also remove one of the most important causes of indebtedness of the South to the countries of the North.

4. At the present World conjuncture, most of the trade of the countries of the South is with countries of the North. South-South cooperation should be high on the agenda of any project to improve the economic conditions of the South and to bring about greater harmony and co-operation among the Southern countries.

India played a pioneering role in wresting freedom from foreign rule. Her unique methods of non-violent struggle with the disciplined participation of the masses, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi has been a source of inspiration of people fighting against oppression will require the same type of mass movement, the same type of non-violent struggle and the same type of non-cooperation with foreign interests and their domestic henchman. In the earlier freedom struggle the rallying cry 'Quit India' was addressed to the British rulers. In the present struggle the same cry should reverberate in the halls and offices of the rich nations, their international agencies like the World Bank and IMF and above all in the offices of the multinational cooperations that have the Indian economy in their strangle-hold. Only mass movement organized along the lines of our earlier freedom struggle can rescue India from foreign domination and control. Nothing less will do, nothing less will work.

Of course this was written almost ten years ago. Today no one can stop globalisation. The corrupt and inefficient governments and their well-paid workers and politicians should all change. People should choose the right alternatives. There lies man freedom and excellence.

Havoc Wrought by High Standard of Living

The future of humankind is in the hands of the present humans. To day man worships science and believes science will save the world. Because of this belief humankind is living on the constant atomic and nuclear fear. At no time in the history of humankind such a danger appeared. Science not merely gave him comforts but also the side effects, like pollution, atomic weapons, energy crisis etc. These problems are completely new to our age and are due to our wrong ways of life.

Compared with the modern man, medieval man was unscientific and dogmatic but he seemed to be ethical and moral, Modern man because of his wrong values has produced the destructive weapons. The line of researches in the destructive line indicates that modern man suffers inwardly. Merely depending upon scientific invention is of no use. To save ourselves from the complete destruction, we need both science and ethics. Without philosophy, science is bottomless and without science, philosophy is useless. Both must be complemented with each other. In his book "Future of Mankind" Karl Jasper analyses the present situation of mankind

and recommends the unification and synthesis of science and philosophy. Mahatma Gandhi realised this problem and reflected upon this problems of man's good life on earth. Gandhiji was a man of the world, who lived in the different parts of the World. When Gandhiji appreciates the Indian way of life and condemns the western way of life, he was not reverting back to past ideal but looking boldly into the smoke and noise of atomic explosions. The modern way of Indians is imitation of the western way of life, which is rooted in competition. The simple unthoughtful imitation of the west brought lot of problems to the Indians. Gandhiji never accepts; the western civilization as a civilization. The industrialization killed the peace of mind from the western people. Because of the industrialization all the evils like marketing business, exploitation of the labour, pollution etc., appeared.

Gandhiji's View on Modern Civilization

According to Gandhiji, neither railways nor hospitals are a test of high and pure civilization. In the opinion of Gandhiji, civilization, in the real sense of the term, consists not in the multiplication, but in the deliberate and voluntary reduction of wants and such an attitude alone promotes real happiness and contentment and increases one's capacity for service. In the words of Gandhiji, "I am and I have been a determined opponent of modern civilization. Why should we be the blotting sheets of western civilization. There is no such thing as Western or European civilization. It is not the British people, who rule India, but modern civilization rules India, through its railways, telegraphs and telephones... As my patriotism is all inclusive and admits of no enmity or ill-will, I do not hesitate, inspite of my horror of western civilizations or materialism, to take from the west what is beneficial for me". In the opinion of Gandhiji, industrial civilization is a disease, because it is all evil. The whole of the European system is based on a mutual distrust and fear. Wallace, the contemporary of Darwin remarked that the amazing material progress of the west made little or no difference in the moral conditions of the peoples of the west. Wisdom is no monopoly of one continent or one race. Gandhiji's opposition to western civilization is really a resistance to its indiscriminate and thoughtless imitation, based on the assumption that Asiatics are fit only to copy everything that comes from the west. On the other hand, the Asiatics - particularly the Indians and their spiritual and cultural heritage have magnificently stood against the onslaughts and savages of time and have contributed greatly to world peace and progress. Gandhiji, as the greatest apostle of truth and non-violence, after Jesus Christ and Lord Buddha, showed the right path to solve national and international conflicts and tensions by peaceful methods and negotiations, based on truth, non-violence and righteousness. Truth, repeated Gandhiji, is the first thing to be sought for and beauty and goodness will then be added on to Truth. In conclusion in the words of Romain Rolland "Tagore is the Plato of our own times and Gandhi is the Saint Paul of our times". He went further and found Jesus in Mahatma Gandhi.

The modern life of man gave him alienation. He is alienated from his job, alienated from his place, alienated from his own self. The integrity of human personality is broken into pieces. The human relations among the members of the family and society have been destroyed. The modern man has no time to

think or meditate upon his own nature and welfare. Because of the wrong way of life he is running the mad rat race, the materialistic way of life. Money oriented life kills the morality of mankind. Realising the dangers of the western way of 'high standard life' Gandhiji said the mark of real civilization is in spirituality, morality and not in the increase of material welfare. In the *Hind Swaraj* Gandhiji analyses the symbols of the western civilization. The book is in the form of arguments between the reader and the editor. According to Gandhi the modern railways, hospitals and lawyers are really the mark of degradations. The high standard of life is only a suicidal attempt and self destruction of man.

The blind imitation of the western culture brought all the evil effects to Indians. Long ago in 1908, Gandhiji predicted the degeneracy of Indians, if they follow the western way of life. The foreign models and structures damaged the spirit of Indians. Now it is time for the Indian to think and turn and back to their own way of life. Even the western world, their culture is under question.

The Indian civilization and patterns of living aim towards the full man, the perfect man. It aims at the harmonious growth of body, mind and spirit. To day man lives under the illusion that the material life is the full life. Material life is only a stepping stone towards perfection. Material life must lead man towards the other spheres of a life, the social, psychological, moral, aesthetical, spiritual and mystical. The industrialised way of life killed the creative aspect of human life. The material search of man stopped him from the inner inquiry. Because of the ruthless western culture man suffers with the inner vacuum. The Indian way of life, culture, gives importance to the spiritual development of man and harmonious development of one's personality.

In the western civilization, the way of life is not the result of long tradition. The west to-day suffers because of its wrong values. The religions and moral development of humankind was sacrificed for the sake of scientific progress. The long term development - permanent growth of humankind was ignored for the sake of immediate benefits, Gandhiji in his *Hind Swaraj* says that western way of life was not a matured way of life. The westerners themselves to-day look at the eastern way of life for the harmonious way of life. The rootless and sensuous way of life gave them innumerable problems, like the problem of old age, the problem of loneliness, the problem of mental illness, the problem of competition, the problem of pollution, the problem of atomic war and the problem of innumerable diseases.

In his spiritual manifesto *The Hind Swaraj*, Mahatma Gandhiji emphasises the greatness of Indian way of life. The Indian way of life is the result of thousands of years of experiments in the sphere of arts, science, philosophy and religion. They never neglected any arts or science for the sake of spiritual attainments. In fact spiritual life is possible only by artistic and scientific way of life. The criticism that Indian way of life is other worldly and life negative is baseless. Indian thinkers produced classics in all the spheres of human life. The ethical codes like *Thirukkural*, *Manudharma sastra*, the epics like *Mahabharatha* and *Ramayana*, religious texts and the moral treatise indicates that they never neglected any aspect of human life. In one of his books (*Indian Philosophy*)

Dr.S.Radhakrishnan says that Indian philosophy begins with the suffering man. After passing on the different systems it ends in man.

Indian way of life is *the way of life*, which gives importance to the systematic development of human. It is based upon strong philosophical insights in the inner realms of human's life. The concepts like Brahman, reverence for life, compassion, oneness of life etc., attracted the western mind. There are thinkers in the west who preferred the Indian way of life. Leo Tolstoy was attracted towards the Indian way of life by reading the English translations of the Indian classics. Schopenhauer was very fond of reading the *Upanishads* and led a life based upon *Upanishadic* insights. Max-Mueller the German scholar, translated the Indian classics under the title, *The Sacred Books of the East*. Mahatma Gandhi loved Indian tradition and heritage. His love towards *Bhagavad Gita* made him to write a commentary based upon that. The gospel of a high standard of living, brought to us, in the economic text books from the west, has done much harm to us, both individual and groups. The western way of life gives much importance to the materialistic side of life and the economy of the western thinkers is based upon increasing material needs.

Gandhiji's Views of Modern Machinery

Gandhiji's great objection to modern machinery was the craze mania towards machinery and not machinery as such. He was aiming not at eradication of all machinery but advocated certain limitations for machinery. In the words of Gandhiji, "To-day, machinery merely helps a few to ride on the backs of millions..., Machinery is like a snake-hole which may contain from one to hundred snakes". According to Gandhiji, mechanisation is good, when the hands are very few and limited for the work to be accomplished within a short period. It is definitely an evil, when there are more hands for the work, as in India. Gandhiji was of the opinion that dead machinery must not be pitted against the millions of living machines represented by the villagers scattered over thousands of villages in India. Machinery to be well used in the real sense, has to help and ease human efforts and labour. However, the present use of modern machinery tends more and more to concentrate wealth in the hands of a few, in total disregard of millions, of man and women, who are badly in need of their daily bread and clothing. In short, the modern machine age aims at converting men into machines.

The western way of life resulted in the eco-crisis. The eco-crisis environmental pollution, etc., are really the problem of inner ignorance of man. Man really is part and parcel of nature. His life depends upon his relation with the nature. Indian way of life gives importance to nature and emphasizes that the life is one. Because of his love towards Indian way of life, Gandhiji emphasized "return to nature". Mind is like a wandering bird, which is never satisfied with the material supplies. Its nature is always in dissatisfaction. So the Indian sages and saints loved a simple material life and higher spiritual life. Spiritual life is possible only by the limitation of the material life.

When Gandhiji analysed the real mark of civilization, he says that civilization, which emphasises the minimization of the material life is the best

civilization. Voluntary poverty, simplicity, and renunciation are the best marks of good way of life. Complexity results in confusion and ignorance. Mahatma Gandhiji did not favour the imitation of the western way of life by Indians. To-day, Indians are following the western models in their socio - political institutions. When the west itself is doubting their basis of big centralised institutions, Indians are simply imitating the west. In the life and works of Gandhi, there is no place for imitation. In his book *Hind Swaraj*, he warned against the imitation of the western way of life in personal and social fields.

When analysing the English Parliamentary system, Mahatma Gandhiji used very strong words and ideas. Leading politicians and thinkers of that time expected that Gandhiji was in a hurry to write the book and he would change the ideas shortly. But Gandhiji never changed from his ideas and words. He changed only one word in the whole of the book.

The western (political) institution is like the white elephant which takes much from the people and in return it gives nothing. Apart from the economy, there is no morality for it and behaves according to the majority of the members. So Gandhiji said that it was acting like a prostitute. He warned the Indians not to follow the western model. But, to-day, we are following the foreign model in all walks of our life and suffering individually and collectively.

After analysing the modern man's problem, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan says that the problem is the 'crisis of the spirit'. He says when as in the case of earlier civilizations, the challenges were of material and external nature; the problems of the later ones are mainly inward and spiritual. His solution is the 'religion of the spirit'. Repeatedly in his books, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan says the solution to the modern man's problem is not the institutionalised religion but the transcendental religion of the spirit'.

The American Philosopher Erich Fromm warns that we are not in danger of becoming slaves any more but becoming robots. Today's culture is the robot culture. The craze after material wealth and mad race after momentary pleasures kills the very spirit of man from man. This is the contribution of the modern culture. The only way out from the present crisis is by the fundamental change within man. Man must change his value system from lower to higher. He must have a vision about his own future and the future of mankind. Indian way of life gives this vision. Arnold Toynbee, the famous historian of civilization, praises and pictures about the Indian civilisation - the Indian way of life. The present standard of living in the west is not the high standard of life. It would be more appropriate to designate to as 'the complex way of life'. Competition is the predominating current in the western way of life. Because of this, the broken houses, the suffering individuals are increasing day by day. The mental houses and the war products industries are not the symbol of a good civilization.

It is wrong to identify real prosperity with greater possession of goods. The statistics of suicides, nervous disorders, juvenile crimes etc., do not show that the countries of the west are happy. The Sarvodaya thinkers are not led by superficialities and they are going deep into the matter. They advocate satisfaction

with self which is something spiritual and should not be confused with satisfaction with the material life.

The present problem is due to the commercialisation of science. That must be replaced by humanisation of science. Instead of science being exploited for power and profit, it has to be used for peace and happiness. According to Wilfred Wellock, "behind the facade of a commercialised and vulgar way of life, one may feel the throb of a deep depression and perceive the shadows of harassing dept and even a longing for the sweet fresh of a simple wholesome life'.

Because of the modern way of life in the west people, especially youths, young housewives and school going children, are living under the fear of an atomic and nuclear war among nations. Young people throughout the world raised their voices and against the atomic and nuclear tests. They are marching against the governments for justice and peace. There are human chains, long marches, sit downs etc. These indicate that the western way of life is not a harmonious orderly and peaceful one.

Modern industrialised way of life, in this process of increasing the material comforts of man has created many problems. Doctors and psychologists are saying that the modern industrialised society is "the stress society" in which man remains greatly disturbed. In USA, the land of luxurious one, we find ever increasing discontent, unrest, instability and crime. The dangerous growth of our cities and towns have resulted in slums. The dirty waters of big factories have destroyed the natural cleanliness and beauty of our rivers and healthy people working in the villages in the natural and healthy surroundings have become rare sights. Villages have been deserted and cities have been filled in by unmanageable mobs where human beings live like machines, and machines think like human beings. As Goldsmith, wrote "where wealth accumulates, men decay". Surrounded by the roaring machines and the conning advertisements and salesmanship of the producers and traders, man has lost himself. He has no creative interest in his work and no real joy in the material comforts of life.

Gandhi reminded us that a nation did not become great merely by erecting huge buildings, establishing giant factories and multiplying wealth for upgrading the living standard of the people. A country becomes really great and worthy of respect only if her citizens imbibe the sterling qualities of the head and the heart which inspire them to sacrifice gladly their individual good for the larger interests of the nation.

Indian way of life was killed by the Indians who initiated the western way of life. The calm, peaceful Indian way of life was disturbed by the introduction of western industries in India. The western system of education produced alienated people. The western system of medicine and law produced more disturbances and conflicts in the simple Indian life. The imitation of the west killed the spirit of India.

Radhakamal Mukerjee in his interesting book, *The Destiny of Civilization*, observes as follows, "Environmental pressures and constraint checking our wants

and activities universally operate, as the tragic Malthusian law of disbalance between population increase, and material resources of any civilization... Domination and power of man over fellowmen with improvements in large scale organisation, specialization and technology lead to an all-round deterioration of civilized life. Further, the lapse of qualities, morale and higher values could always be discerned, whenever and wherever we find the supremacy of instrumental proximate and existential values dominate over intrinsic, ultimate and transcendent values". According to Radhakamal Mukerjee, the defeat and breakdown of modern civilization must be considered from three-fold dimensions, biological, psycho-social, and moral-spiritual. Mankind has never faced such deterioration of biological qualities on this planet before and this is mainly due to unprecedented explosion of population through new inventions into a broader expenses of experience. The supreme task of our time is to start the transition from a mechanistic and fragmented to a human and whole society, from a materialistic and quantitative, to a spiritual and qualitative society.

Today, mankind is passing through a miserable way of life. Unfortunately, it believes that the recent way of life is good. This is like the dreamer who believes that the dream is real. The present civilization - way of life - is satanic which the Hinduism names as *Kaliyuga*, the black age. The present self-destructive civilization must be set right by morals and ethics.

To-day 15% of the world population who are living in the Northern countries (USA, Canada, England, France, Holland, Germany, and Japan) are enjoying 85% of the world's resources. As a result 85% of the people living in Southern countries (Countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America) are left with 15% of the world's resources. 15% of the elite living in urban centres of the third world countries utilizes 85% of the resources and consequently 85% of the rural population in the Southern countries are left with meagre resources. They do hard work but live in utter poverty without the basic requirements of life.

The Northern countries have reached this position due to the possession of increased and modern weapons, colonization, imperialism, exploitation, industrialism and commerce. The Southern countries which once made signal contributions to human civilization and led the world have today become centres of degrading poverty.

To-day, we have enough food and other things, for the entire humankind. But some have excess and much is being wasted or wrongly spent while many have very little and practically they starve. How to change this? The Gandhian answer is reduction of wants, voluntary poverty, renunciation of luxuries and simple life. High standard of living can be only at the expense of the poor. If we really feel that we all belong to one family, then the high standard of living has to be given up. Mahatma Gandhi's life is a monumental demonstration of a simple life and high thinking. Further, racial opposition and antagonism comprise another factor at the biological level, causing stress and stains in the fabric of civilization. Psycho-socially, the fine and harmonious balance between intelligence and impulse, between intellectual and effective life is now profoundly disturbed. Intelligence,

which has reached its highest level in man and has become a dominant factor for conscious social manipulation and integration, receives a set-back due to the excessive, over-elaborate and highly centralised organisation of a technological civilization and the increasing diminution of the areas of the individual freedom, initiative and responsibility. Above all, we notice the polarity or ambivalence of man's impulses, emotions and attitudes like love and hate tenderness and aggressiveness, justice, goodness and exploitation and wickedness. We also find his adaptive imbalance, through sublimation of undesirable biological drives and his inability to solve inner tensions and conflicts all these tend towards the age of frustrations, conflicts and worries and anxieties.

The high standard of life produced a generation that is suffering from spiritual starvation. It is emotionally impoverished and culturally and religiously forsaken. The present generation is standing in between the atomic and nuclear weapons and a new way of life. It is in between the materialistic principle of getting, and the spiritual principle of finding life by giving it. Always the Kingdom of God is at hand but to enter it, we need the knowledge of truth, understanding and style of life nourished by spirituality and morality Superficially the crisis is economic and political, but its roots are in spiritual fields.

Our generation needs a new way of life which takes account of the whole man, the economic man who lives by bread, and the spiritual man who lives by truth, fellowship, service and self-giving meditation, affection, love etc. To-day human's development is not in a harmonious way. He is not in a position to realise that he is becoming slave to material things. Life as breathing, eating and sleeping is not enough. There is that in man which forever as piers after a plus, a more perfect and abundant life, when he travels by wider visions.

To-day, we find, our modern civilization is at cross-roads and faces a terrible crisis. According to Gandhiji, the spectre of indulgence threatening man's existence through violence is generated by (1) destroying the limited resources by high standards of living (2) Making man's own growth perverted (3) Generating conflicts with increasing intensity. Therefore, Gandhiji radically change his views and life-style and preached for the use of self-control rather than self-indulgence. Gandhiji's model for industries was for the fulfillment of the basic necessities of man. The concept of taking the least from nature and society and giving the most for the benefit of both must be an essential feature of our culture and civilizations. It is no exaggeration to say the new world economic order is only a replica of the Sarvodaya pattern of society formulated and evolved by Gandhiji, Sarvodaya and Anthyodaya are based on a non-violent social order in which man occupies the focal point and stands for the welfare of each and everyone in society and welfare of all. Further they are based on the technology of production by masses and not mass production, decentralisation and trusteeship plan on a global order. In short, the new socio-economic order implies a change in the morals and values of the society and aims at a more humanistic rational and spiritual changes in all departments of life. Gandhiji proved beyond doubt that moral virtue and political grandeur may be synthesized in modern civilization and is indeed the supreme example of the combination of goodness and greatness and showed by his teachings and way of living that he was a seer of humanity and served as a beacon light for

the modern youth who are misguided by high standards of living, over indulgence and multiplication of material needs. In the words of Dr. V.P. Varma, "For a bewildered and chaotic world, Gandhiji reasserted the spiritual and moral approach to solve many problems. His noble message of truth and non-violence liberty and equality, justice and non-exploitation, welfare of all and peace in all parts of the world have relevance in modern times. He was a saviour of souls and not the wrecker of civilizations. He came to build and not to destroy. His ideal was concord in place of discord; peace in place of strife, progress in place of retrogression". Profit, interest and material gain is the centre of the Western System. Like wild fire, they grow and not decrease. Food, health, education and judiciary are all commercialised. The profit motive take demonic dimensions and destroy spiritually, morality and relationship.

Asceticism - Voluntary Poverty - Simplicity

Asceticism

Gandhi was a moralist and a social scientist and he tried to solve all the problems of human-social, political, economical, religious on the basis of morality. Today humankind suffers not because of the material insufficiency but lack of morality. An analysis of Gandhiji's life and work shows that he worked not for a group of people, race or nation but the whole of humankind.

Repeatedly, Gandhi said that he never invented anything new. He was not at all interested in philosophising or making a new religious sect after him. He tried to live according to the teachings of the classics of the great religions of the world, because he found truth in all the religions. He was a Hindu by birth, so naturally he was influenced by the teachings of Hinduism. In the Hindu way of life, morality or dharma is the basis for all the activities of man. Dharma is the bed rock on which one must live in this world and it is dharma which lifts man towards perfection.

Mahatma Gandhiji lived an ascetic way of life. He recommended, to those who came to him for advice, an ascetic way of life. Even though he was ascetic, who practised and preached asceticism, he was not an ascetic, in the traditional sense of the term. His ascetic way of life is different in many ways. In the name of asceticism, he never ran away from responsibilities and worldly duties. He never asked people to renounce the activities of life. Because he was a man with full of activities and he motivated people to act in a full way. His ascetic way of life, his spiritual and religious way of life directed him to do the social work as a great social revolutionary.

Though Gandhiji was a Hindu, he was influenced by the various classics of the different religions of the world. *The Sermon on the mount, the Upanishads, the holy Koran and the Bhagavath Gita* are the important books which Gandhiji used to read daily. Among those he considered Bhagavath Gita like his "mother". Whenever there was a problem, he used to read Bhagavath Gita and got new light on those problems.

While he was in England he read *Bhagavath Gita* and upto the last day of his worldly life he used to read it repeatedly. He wrote a commentary on *Bhagavath Gita* in his personal and social life. The purpose of life according to Gandhiji, is not pleasure but 'truth'. Gandhian way of life is based upon morality. It is both an ideal as well as a practical way. It is an ideal, because it is an inner urge of humans towards perfection. It is practical, because only a practical life leads one towards the ideal. That is why Gandhi is said to be a practical idealist.

The *Upanishads* are the essential part of the *Vedas*, which recommend the ascetic way of life. In the midst of his heavy political social, educational and other experiments Gandhi read some of the *Upanishads* also. He was very fond of quoting and reciting the *Katha Upanishad* early verse which says that the whole earth is the property of God and man is advised to enjoy the worldly life by renunciation and it is the secret of enjoyment according to Gandhi.

The Tamil ethical code *Tirukkural* recommends renunciation under the chapter 'renunciation' (Thuravu). The very first verse of this chapter says that renunciation is the best way of getting away from the pains. All the moral literatures in Tamil and Sanskrit very clearly declare that renunciation is the proper way to attain perfection in life.

Gandhiji was an experimenter and his whole life was an experiment to him. He conducted a lot of experiments in almost all the spheres of human life. In the spiritual and religious spheres also he conducted experiments. One such experiment is in the ascetic way of life. He declared that it was difficult for him in the beginning but latter on it was a pleasure to live with the minimum. Complete renunciation is impossible for human beings, because the very physical body is a property. So, man must live with the minimum necessities and use the properties for the service of the humankind. The physical body must be maintained in a healthy condition and used for the service of humankind. For the maintenance of the body, Gandhiji advised the Satyagrahies to do raja yoga and follow nature cure.

Gandhiji remarked that the world would laugh at one who practised a different way of life. But, an individual's life-one's own perfection is more important than leading a way of life which is accepted by the world. So Gandhi after reading the religious classics put them into practice.

When Gandhi advocates voluntary poverty and asceticism, some critics may say that Gandhian philosophy is not relevant to the modern world and it recommends the life of a primitive society. Gandhi was not a traditionalist who recommended the backwardness or regress in life. In his life time, he witnessed two world wars, travelled throughout the land, moved with the different religious and racial people. His philosophy was not going backwards, but had a clear vision about the future.

The wars on earth are mostly due to misunderstanding of man about his own nature. All the wars are due to the greediness of man. The highly sophisticated luxurious people are making war on each other, because of the

misunderstanding of their own nature. Gandhi gave importance to man. Man must live with minimum basic needs and must live with great and noble values as the highest principles in life.

When Gandhiji prepared non-violent soldiers for the national freedom struggle, he prepared them not merely for the struggle but also for a better life also. Because, the national freedom struggle movement is only a step towards full freedom. The following of the vows is a must for the satyagrahies. Gandhi himself followed the vows in his life. All the vows were practised by the religious people for their spiritual purposes. But, Gandhiji followed them for the national purpose. That is why he added new vows with old vows. Gandhiji never neglected any of the traditional practices and principles but lived them in life and added something more. He came to create or construct and not to destroy.

Mahatma Gandhiji learned the importance of religious commands, *vratas* or vows from his mother. When he was a small boy he observed how his mother followed the religious vows. When he was preparing for his journey to London for his higher studies, he gave three vows to his mother. He followed all those commands, while he was in England and later on his life. The vows saved Gandhi from so many pit falls. Gandhi may remind us the ancient seers of India, but he differs from them in his refusal to leave the world, and accepted the responsibilities within the world. He renounced the lower nature of human being and lived with the higher goals of mankind, like a true *Karmayogi*.

The physical discipline and suffering gave him a power of endurance. In England, in the winter of 1930, he went about without much additional covering and without boots or shoes when others shivered with cold inspite of their over coats and other woollen dresses. The same was the case with Socrates of whom Alcitriades said, "His endurance was simply marvellous when being cut off from our supplies, we were compelled to go without food on such occasions, which often happen in times of war, he was superior not only to me but to everybody. There was no one of to be compared with him. His aptitude in enduring cold was surprising. There was a severe frost for the winter in that region was really tremendous, and everybody else either remained indoors or if they were out, had an amazing quality of clothes, and either feet swathered in fell and flexes; in the midst of this. Socrates with his bare feet on the ice and in his ordinary dress marched better than the other soldiers who had shoes, and the looked daggers at him because he seemed to despise them". (Plato - Dialogue - Symposium - Quoted by Chandrasankar Sukla - Gandhian View of Life (p.131-132).

Sometimes, asceticism, i.e., the strict control of all the senses, may be misunderstood in the sense of suppression and torture of life. But, this is not so. Gandhi neither rejected the world nor avoided the experiences of life. In this life, upto a certain period he enjoyed the world pleasures. He was a married man. In the name of asceticism he never advised people to go to the forest and mountains of India to avoid the din and puzzle of the world. But there is a limit to the sensuous pleasure. Though man is made up of physical the spiritual moral aspect of life is important than the physical, life. The physical life is for the development of moral life which leads one to the spiritual life in which one realises

that the whole life is one of Self-realisation or Truth - realisation is the goal of life. The proper control of the senses and channelisation of the life force towards higher values of life is possible only by ascetic way of life. The internal and external problems of man are due to indiscipline. The way out of this crisis is through asceticism and spiritual life.

The physical pleasures take man to nowhere. One day man must take the path of return or retreat from the ways and things of the world. He then begins to cultivate the spirit of detachment and self-denial. The self-denial is the denial of ego. The ascetic path deflects man to have a vision of his own self and the supreme self. The *Upanishads*, *Gita* and other religious texts direct man towards the full life or the spiritual life. Ramakrishna Paramhansa used to compare the mind with the wandering bird. The bird travels in all direction and at last there is no other place for that to take rest except where it started the journey. The sensuous pleasure and the life based upon physical enjoyment must end with the self enquiry. The proper control of the senses. If the whole of the society is under the illusion of physical pleasure, that society will suffer with the diseases, like war, pollution, over-population, eco-crisis, energy crisis, etc.

The whole life of Mahatma Gandhiji was inspired by religion. Religion in the life of Gandhi is neither dogma nor ritual but love and non-violence. Religion of Gandhi is full of faith in the absolute values of truth, love and justice. It is a persistent endeavour to realize them on this earth. Gandhi believed that the ultimate aim of man's life was salvation. That is the utter extinction of egoism. To Gandhiji the soul was immortal and hence death meant no calamity or disaster. On the other hand it was a blessing bestowed by the creator on all life. It was a grand event, which should be regarded as preparations for a better life than the past one. For the good, it was a transistion to a better state and for the evil man, a beneficent escape.

In the Hindu tradition, the life of man is divided into Varna and Ashrama. The individual's life is divided into four parts. They are *bramacharya*, *grahasta*, *vanaprastha* and *sanyasa*. In otherwords, the individual's life is divided into the days of studentship, the days of family life, the days of withdrawal and the days of the unworldly life of a *sanyasin*. According to the Hindu tradition each and every individual must lead a life of a *sanyasin* in the end.

Gandhi was a revolutionary. The true revolutionaries in human history are not the dictators and warriors but the great teachers, prophets, philosophers and scientists who created revolution in society by the accumulated impact of their teachings. Gandhi showed a new way of life to the world. In every field of life, he introduced new ideas. He was not a theoretician but a practical activist. When he emphasised the *sanyasa* and the following up the vows in life, he practised them in his private and public life. He followed the eleven vows in his own life and asked the satyagrahies to follow them in life.

Gandhian approach to life is not dogmatic but scientific. He was scientific in each and every sphere of life. His experiments in the different spheres of life

are famous. In the spiritual field he conducted some experiments and declared his findings. One such is the "inner voice". Gandhiji says that the inner voice is there in each and every human being. It is audible to some who try for that. The ego is the problem. The following of the vows is the basic qualification for an experimenter, wants to do experiments in the spiritual field. Like any other branches of science, spirituality is also a branch of science. A scientist needs qualification to conduct an experiment. The inner purity is the basic requirement for spiritual experiments. The purity of body, mind and heart is possible only by following the vows. The disciplined way of life leads man towards higher sphere. The disciplined way of life is the *sanyasin's* way of life.

To-day the world suffers because of the indiscipline and unsystematic way of life. The ascetic way of life as preached by Gandhi is the solution to the present day problems of man. The ascetic way of life is not a theoretical solution. The ascetic way of life is the practical way of life towards perfection.

There is a lot of misunderstanding about this way of life in the western literary world. Bertrand Russel in this book '*The Philosophy of Santayana*' (1940) says "the man, who is enjoying a good dinner or carving a statue out of marble is not thinking of matter as his enemy, but as his opportunity. The ascetic, on the contrary who, if he is logical, is a Manichaeian, condemns all pleasures that depend on matter, and regards them as due to material part of himself from which he strives to be liberated. This condemnation applies not only to the pleasures commonly called sensual, but to the whole realm of art, since art is bound up with sense. Such a morality is an outcome of despair, and arises only when the primitive zest for life is extinct' (Bertrand Russell's *Dictionary of Mind, Matter and Morals*: p.13). It is difficult for the western mind to understand the ascetic way of life. Great intellect like Bertrand Russell misunderstood the Indian concept of *sanyasa*. As a result of his misunderstanding, reacted like this. In Indian philosophy, the materialistic way of life and the spiritualistic way of life are not opposite to each other. The materialistic way of life is a step towards the spiritual life. In the name of spirituality, Indian thinkers never neglected the physical aspect of life.

The Penguin *Dictionary of Psychology* describes an ascetic as an individual, who values lightly sensuous pleasures, or at least denies them to himself. The word asceticism is described as 'more or less equivalent to mortification of the flesh in the ordinary religious usage'. This is another example for the western mind's misunderstanding of the concept of asceticism.

In Indian conception, an ascetic is neither against art, not against pleasures. The Indian ascetic is a full man who channelises his life energy towards the higher values of life. He renounces the ego in order to realise the oneness of life. An ascetic never runs away from his responsibilities and worldly duties. In brief Mahatma Gandhi lived and preached an ascetic way of life. The problems of man and the problems of the nations are due to sensuous pleasures. The ascetic way of life, systemic and holistic way of life is the answer to the present problems of humankind. It is not merely a solution for present day problems but it is the way to the one world in future.

Voluntary Poverty

Gandhi was born not in a poor family but he took the way of a poor man and identified himself with the poor and the downtrodden. He was from a business (bania) community. He was trained to become a lawyer but he lived a life of a spiritualist. In his autobiography, *"My Experiments with Truth"* he records how he lived in different periods of his life till 1921. The South African phase of Mahatma Gandhi's life is an important phase in which he conducted so many experiments in different spheres of human life. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi became Mahatma Gandhi or a great soul because of his experiences and experiments in spiritual life.

The early years of Mahatma Gandhi show that he never accepted anything as it is. He put each and every practice under reason and decided the validity of them, only on the basis of reason. When his mother practised untouchability he revolted against that evil practice. He disliked the temples which are full of unhygienic conditions. The individuality of Mahatma Gandhi, the non-conforming attitude of Mahatma Gandhi was there even when he was a small boy. He found that there were no differences between himself and the scavenger's son. Even in his early days, he lived a life which was simple, natural and normal.

The South African phase of Gandhi's life is important because Gandhi learned the art and science of war without violence there. He entered South Africa as a Barristor of Law and turned into a peace maker, satyagrahi, constructive worker, community builder, visionary and social activist. He became a non-violent fighter who fought injustice. Voluntary poverty is an essential quality of every non-violent soldier.

Service to the poor was not only Gandhiji's ideal but also his greatest ambition in life. For that he threw himself among the poor people. He welcomed voluntary poverty as a way to serve the poor people. In the way of eating, dressing and travelling he preferred the way of the last man in the society. He preferred to travel only in the third class compartment. In 1918-19 he was compelled to give up the third class compartment travel on the basis of his poor health. Gandhiji recorded his constant pain and shame, whenever he travelled in the first class. Earlier when he was in South Africa he demanded and travelled in first class compartment as a Barrister of law. But after his long experiments, he realised that his purpose was not to earn money or get a good name but identify himself with others and work for justice and peace. After this realisation, he voluntarily gave away the sense of property and riches and worked like an ordinary agriculturists.

When Gandhiji was in London he spent much money to dress like an European gentleman. In the opening years of South African phase of his life, he was very particular about his dress and spent much time and money for it. The South African experiments, the reading of Ruskin, Leo Tolstoy and Thoreau gave him new insights into the inner life. After reading the book *"Unto This Last"* he was shocked and that psychic shock changed the very roots of Gandhian life. He became a revolutionary reformer and set up an Ashrams. The inner changes gave

way to external changes. He left things one by one. When he observed extreme poverty in Indian villages, he shed tears. When he observed people had no other dress to change except that was on the body, he decided to live like the poor Indian farmer.

Voluntary poverty, that is giving away the sense of possession, is not a pleasant experience. Gandhi says that it was painful in the beginning. Like any ordinary human being, Gandhi also felt pain when he left the sense of possession. The painfulness and sorrowfulness is only in the beginning. When the mind learns to live without attachments and to live within different spheres of life, Gandhiji says that he learned the art of living without material properties. He says that his voluntary poverty helped him to walk, work and serve more freely among the poor people and serve them to his greatest satisfaction.

Necessity and Implication of Voluntary Simplicity or Poverty

Voluntary simplicity or poverty was advocated and practised by the founders of most of the great religions. Buddha, Mahavira, Jesus, Moses and Mohammed, many saints, rishis and wise men like St. Francis, John Wollman, Valmiki, Vasishta, Thiruvalluvar, many Hebrew prophets, Muslim sufis, great leaders like Tolstoy and Gandhi preached and practised voluntary simplicity. It is also remarkable and significant many members of Monastic Orders practise voluntary simplicity. In our times, we observe that the mental climate is not favourable especially among the younger generations and there is no clear insight and understanding of the value of simplicity. Simplicity is a relative matter depending on climate, customs, culture and above all on the character of the individual. Voluntary simplicity involves both inner and outer conditions and it implies singleness of purpose, sincerity and honesty within ourselves and also following steadily the path of truth and non-violence as well as avoiding external and material possessions, irrelevant to the chief aim, purpose and ideals of life. Above all, it implies puritan outlook and an ordering and guiding of our energy, our desires, passions and restraints rightful and noble and lofty directions and proper sublimation in other directions, in order to secure great abundance of life and energies in the right direction, and above all deliberate and organisation of life for nobler, loftier and greater ideals in life.

Material simplicity means and implies adoption of consumption criteria and methods which are designed to (a) help a life of creative simplicity, free from excessive attachment to material goods (b) help and promote the nations to release more of their wealth to share with those, who do not have even the basic necessity of life (c) help individuals to become more self-sufficient and less dependent on large and complex institutions (d) to restore a sense of proportion between the material and non-material aspects of living (e) to develop higher values of life and cultivate spiritual outlook and approach in life. Richard Gregg is of the opinion that voluntary simplicity can have a decisive and effective impact, since the consumption is the area within which individual can affect the economic life of the community. The individual's share may be very small and limited. But, it is in the consumption area within which every person can exercise his or her control over the forces of economic production and distribution. Further, the power to

reject, the will to do without, can counterbalance the forces of greed and competition that perpetuate our destructive economic system. Richard Gregg concludes" "All those, who desire to reform the existing economic system can take an effective part by living simply-voluntary simplicity - and urging and encouraging others to do likewise... Capitalism is no mere exterior organisation of bankers and industrialists. It consists of spirit and attitude and habitual actions in and among all of us".

It is rather very strange and ironical that in the present modern set-up of financial price-systems, and credit structures, which control productions and distributive system, that huge stocks of wheat and potatoes are allowed to be burnt in the United States of America while millions are starving in India and in China and tons of oranges are allowed to rot and perish in California, children in many villages in India and in Ethiopia are subject to rickets and other forms of ill-health for lack of vitamins. The just and equitable distribution of material things is not merely a problem of technique or of organisation; but it is essentially and primarily a moral problem. In his interesting book *A Study of History* Arnold Toynbee comes to the logical conclusion that the real growth of any civilization does not consist in increased command over the physical environment and over the nations but lies in what he calls either realization or development for suitable and intangible relationships and point out that this process involves both a simplification of the apparatus of life and also a remarkable transfer of interest and energy from material thing to a higher system in life. In short the strong quantitative and external element features in science, modern machinery, money systems and their product make our thinking and approach to life mechanistic and divided. Above all, the relationships in the present modern world are artificial and provide more energy outwardly and take away from us our inner energy, peace of mind and our sublime and spiritual aspects of life. All these very strongly and psychologically point out towards a life of voluntary poverty of simplicity advocated and practised by Tolstoy and Gandhi, in modern times.

Service to human beings pre-supposes the identification with them. Without identifying with the poor, service is impossible. The possession of any material property is in between the poor people and social worker. The mind which always has the sense of material properties, neither has a desire to serve the people nor to seek God. The sense of material property is a hard cover which is covering the self from Self-realisation, God-realisation and Truth realisation. In order to live a superior life, better life, one must sacrifice the lower values. Because spirituality is possible only to a pure mind which has no sense of possession. Gandhi came away from the lower values to higher values, in order to attain his supreme value, which is realisation of Truth. So voluntary poverty is a basic requirement for a truth seeker.

Gandhiji was aware that the world will laugh at him but he was a man who decided everything on the basis of his own understanding, experience and experiments. "The world will laugh at me, I know". Gandhiji said. The world might judge it as a foolish act but for Gandhiji, it was a great treasure. Voluntary poverty was a great treasure to Mahatma Gandhiji and it was the richest treasure for him. He invited people to compete with him in becoming poor voluntarily.

Though he lived a simple way of life, he says that he was a rich man. He considered simplicity and voluntary poverty as the greatest riches in his life.

Though Gandhi was educated in England, he was also aware of the limitations of the civilization and culture of that country. In his manifesto *The Hind Swaraj*, he criticised the western civilization and explained the greatness of Indian civilization. When talking about the greatness of Indian (traditional Indian or a Sarvodaya) civilization and culture, Gandhiji says that, Indian civilization emphasizes not the maximisation of things but living in simplicity and poverty. He lived in voluntary poverty and preached the same to the people of India. Self-realisation is possible only by voluntary poverty and simplicity.

As a spiritualist and God-fearing man, Gandhiji says that the sense of possession implies provision for the future. A God fearing man, a truth-fearing man, need not worry about the future. A follower of love need not possess anything for tomorrow. The material world and the spiritual experience never go together. A spiritual seeker must take the vow of voluntary poverty. The rich have a superfluous store of things, which they do not need and which are, therefore, neglected and wasted, while millions are starved to death for want of substance. Perfect fulfilment of the idea of non-possession requires that man should be like the bird which has no roof over its head, no clothing, no stock of food for the tomorrow. Man will indeed need his daily bread, but it will be God's business, and not his, to provide it.

Gandhiji says that the very body itself is a possession and must be used for the sake of service. The purpose of the body is not sensuous enjoyment, but service to the people. In Hindu way of life every individual is expected to go to the forest and lead the life of meditation. This is the third ashrama. The Vanaprastha ashrama is the period of meditation. One must enter into it after renunciation of all the riches, relations, name and fame. In all the different cultures, civilizations, and religions, voluntary poverty plays an important role. The highest form of religion requires a giving up of all possessions.

Love and possession can not go together. Renounce all and dedicated it to God and then live. The God-centered life, Truth-centered life, never requires any material properties. The right of living is derived from renunciation. Voluntary poverty was, Gandhi's view, essential for one wishing to serve God and humanity, and his own ambition was to identify himself with the lowest of the low, and the poorest of the poor in this world.

Voluntary poverty is accepted by all the great religions of the world. The great religions, Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Jainism recommend voluntary poverty as a requirement for the spiritual life. The prophets of these religions lived in simplicity among the poor people. Great thinkers of mankind like Karl Mark, Walt Witman and Tagore recommended the life of simplicity and poverty for the future of humankind. The Communist ideology recommends the abolition of personal property, which is a form of simple, poor and natural form of life.

A careful analysis and critical examination of the past and present wars of humankind indicate that they are due to human greed. The wars were fought to get the material wealth of one group of men by another group of men. The only way to escape from the wars is to change our value system. The materialistic values must be changed to spiritual. The external search must be diverted towards the inner. The lower values must be replaced by higher values. Voluntary poverty must be placed in place of material desires.

Our modern technology has changed the value system of humankind. Today man is more sensuous and materialistic. So he is increasing his needs and lives in the midst of innumerable products. In fact he is becoming or already has become slave to his own products. Today, he is aiming towards a more pleasant life and not a good life to live. Voluntary poverty is a fundamental vow in good life and Mahatma Gandhiji practised it and preached it throughout his life. Gandhian way of life gives much importance to voluntary poverty.

Gandhiji was not only a great political leader, but also a moral and social scientist, who advocated and practised "limitations of wants". A certain degree of physical comfort and orderliness and harmony are necessary for everyone in life. But above a certain level, it becomes an obstacle and hindrance instead of any help or progress in life. Therefore, the idea of creating an unlimited and huge number of wants and satisfying them is delusive and makes one selfish and greedy. The goal of modern materialistic craze will take us down-hill in the path of progress and in our spiritual life. On the other hand voluntary poverty of simplicity bestows on us a certain kind of freedom and clearness of vision and insight. But simple living and high thinking have meaning and purpose in life, only when they are self-chosen and self regulated and they must not be imposed or enforced by others. Will these small changes that I make voluntarily in my own life and by others in their daily life and activities result in large and meaningful differences to the well being of others? What are my responsibilities to the other members of the human family, who are living in grinding poverty? Am I missing much of the richness and luxuries of life, by being preoccupied with the search for social status and for consumer goods that are costly and decorative? These must be the leading and important questions that every sane and rational person must put to himself in his efforts and endeavour to help the poor and the down-trodden. The nature, tenor and tones of answers that are given to such searching questions will determine our attitude and outlook towards nature towards ourselves and towards the members of the society and such considerations have the same roots and foundations, as the conceptions of voluntary poverty and voluntary simplicity and simple and spiritual life led by Gandhiji.

Renunciation in Gandhiji's Own Words

1) "Remember that one verse of the *Ishopanishad* and forget all about the other scriptures. You can of course drown yourselves and be suffocated in the ocean of scriptures. They are good for the learned, if they will be humble and wise, but for the ordinary man in the street, nothing but that mantra is necessary to carry him across the ocean.

God the Ruler pervades all there is in this universe, Therefore renounce and dedicate all to Him and then enjoy or use the portion that may fall to thy lot. Never covet anybody's possessions.

Harijan, 30-1-1937

2) The rich should ponder well as to what is their duty today. They who employ machineries to guard their wealth may find those very guardians turning on them. The moneyed classes have got to learn how to fight either with arms or with the weapon of non-violence. For those who wish to follow the latter way the best and most effective mantram is : "Enjoy thy wealth by renouncing it. Explained it means: "Earn your crores by all good means. But understand that your wealth is not yours; it belongs to the people. Take what you require for your legitimate needs, and use the remainder for society". This truth has hitherto not been acted upon; but, if moneyed classes do not even act on it these times of stress, they will remain the slaves of their riches and passions and consequently of those who overpower them.

But, I have visions that the end of this war will mean also the end of the rule of capital. I see coming the day of the rule of the poor, whether that rule be through force of arms or of non-violence. Let it be remembered that physical force is transitory even as the body is transitory. But the power of the spirit is permanent, even as the spirit is everlasting.

Harijan, 1-2-1942.

3. When I found myself drawn into the political coil, I asked myself what was necessary for me in order to remain absolutely untouched by immorality, by what is known as political gain. I do not propose to take you through all the details of that act of performance interesting and, to me, sacred though they are but I can only tell you that it was a difficult struggle in the beginning and it was a wrestle with my wife and as I can vividly recall with my children also. Be that as it may, I came definitely to the conclusion that, if I had to serve the people in whose midst my life was cast and of whose difficulties I was witness from day-to-day, I must discard all wealth, all possession.

I cannot tell you with truth that, when this belief came to me, I discarded everything immediately. I must confess to you that progress at first was slow. And now, as I recall those days of struggle, I remember that it was also painful in the beginning. But as days went by, I saw that I had to throw overboard many other things, which I used to consider as mine, and a time came when it became a matter of positive joy to give up those things. And one after another by almost geometric progression, the things slipped away from me. And as I am describing my experiences, I can say a great burden fell off my shoulders, and I felt that I could now walk with ease and do my work also in the service of my fellowmen with great comfort and still greater joy. The possession of anything then became a troublesome thing and a burden.

Exploring the cause of that joy, I found that, if I kept anything as my own, I had to defend it against the whole world. I found also that there were many people who did not have the thing, although they wanted it; and I would have to

seek police assistance also, if hungry, famine-stricken people, finding me in a lonely place, wanted not merely to divide the thing with me but to dispossess me. And I said to myself; if they wanted it and would take it, they do so not from any malicious motive, but they would do it, because theirs was a greater need than mine.

And then I said to myself: possession seems to me to be a crime. I can only possess certain things when I know that others, who also want to possess similar things are able to do so. But we know, every-one of us can speak from experience, that such a thing is an impossibility. Therefore, the only thing that can be possessed by all is non-possession, not to have anything whatsoever. In other words a willing surrender and voluntary poverty.

You might then well say to me: but you are keeping many things on your body even as you are speaking about voluntary poverty and not possessing anything whatsoever! And your taunt would be right if you only would have superficially understood the meaning of the thing that I am speaking about just now. It is really the spirit behind. Whilst you have body, you will have to have something to clothe the body with also. But, then you will take for the body not all that you can get but the least possible the least with which you can do. You will take for your house not many mansions, but the least cover that you can do with. And similarly with reference to your food and so on.

Now see that there is here a daily conflict between what you and we understand today as civilization and the state which I am picturing to you as a state of bliss and a desirable state. On the other hand, the basis of culture and civilization is understood to be the multiplication of all your wants. If you have one room, you will desire to have two rooms, three rooms, the more the merrier. And similarly, you will want to have as much furniture as you can put in your house, and so on, endlessly. And the more you possess, the better culture you represent, or some such thing. I am putting it, perhaps not as nicely as the advocates of that civilization would put it, but I am putting it to you in the manner, I understand it.

And on the other hand, you find the less you possess, the less you want, the better you are. And better for what? Not for enjoyment of his life, but for enjoyment of personal service to your fellow-beings; service to which you dedicate yourselves, body, soul and mind... even the body is not yours. It has been given to you as a temporary possession, and it can also be taken from you by him who has given it to you.

Therefore, having that absolute conviction in me, such must be my constant desire that this body also may be surrendered at the will of God, and while it is at my disposal, must be used not for dissipation, not for self-indulgence, not for pleasure, but merely for service and service in the whole for your waking hours. And if this is true with reference to clothing and other things that we use...?

And those who have actually followed out this vow of voluntary poverty to the fullest extent possible (to reach absolute perfection is an impossibility, but the

fullest possible extent for a human being) those who have reached the ideal of that state, they testify that when you dispose your self of everything you have, you really possess all the treasures of the world. In other words, you really get all that is in reality necessary for you, everything. If food is necessary, food will come to you.

Many of you are men and women of prayer, and I have heard from very many Christian lips that they got their food in answer to prayer, that they get everything in answer to prayer. I believe it. But I want you to come with me a step further and believe with me that those, who voluntarily give up everything on this earth, including the body-that is to say, have readiness to give up everything (and they must examine themselves critically, rigidly, and give always an adverse judgement against themselves) those, who will follow this, will really find that they are never in want.

Want must not again be taken literally. God is the hardest task-master I have known on this earth, and He tries you through and through. And when you find that your faith is failing or your body is failing you, and you are sinking, He comes to your assistance somehow or other and proves to you that you must not loose your faith and that he is always at your beck and call, but on His terms not on your terms. So I have found, I cannot recall a single instance when, at the eleventh hour he has forsaken me.

.... *Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi.*

Simplicity and Voluntary Poverty = More Resources

Great prophets have emphasised simple life; Jesus was born as a "homeless child" in a cattle shed. He worked as a carpenter. He led a simple life throughout. He wanted people to select between God and mammon. He warned that human cannot live by bread alone. He further asserted that even if a camel enters the eye of a needle, rich cannot enter heaven. Prince Siddhartha was born on a street corner in Lumbini and he later renounced his princely life and was in search of wisdom in total simplicity and became a Buddha. He rejected greed and unidimensional material life.

Marx and others stressed the importance of material life since vast majority of people lived under conditions of dehumanizing poverty and perishing. But it would be a major error of reductionism if one stops simply with the material level of existence. As beautifully summarised by Ken Wilber in his book *A Sociable God*, we can think human life in terms of four levels - (matter), body, mind (emotion), soul (intellect) and spirit. Without body human cease to exist, But with mere body human existence will be a very limited one. E.F. Schumacher, speaks of plant, animal and human levels of existence. Simple life also implies holistic life at all levels and life in harmony with fellow humans and nature.

Let us now quote from two westerners - St. Francis of Assisi of Italy and Peace Pilgrim of U.S.A.

Words of St. Francis of Assisi

"On seeing a poor person, he said to a brother: "Brother, we must give this mantle back to this poor fellow, to whom it belongs. We had it as a loan until we might find some one poorer than ourselves. (of course it was Francis' own mantle, but he would have it so) I don't want to be thief, and it would be charged against us as theft if we did not give it to a needier person".

"To God's servants money is nothing but the devil and a Venomous snake".

"If we find money any where, let us give it no more thought than the dust under our feet".

Peace Pilgrim's Words

"The simplification of life is one of the steps to inner peace. A persistent simplification will create an inner and outer well - being that places harmony in one's life".

"For me this began with a discovery of the meaninglessness of possessions beyond my actual and immediate needs. As soon as I had brought myself down to need level, I began to feel a wonderful harmony in my life between inner and outer well - being, between spiritual and material well - being...."

"I shall not accept more than I need while others in the world have less than they need.

ECONOMIC LIFE

Introduction

In Modern times, there has been a growing pessimism about the benefits of economic growth and development and about continued emphasis on material consumption, especially in the developed countries. Further, increased amounts of material consumption have not led to social harmony and happiness. On the contrary, it has heightened a feeling of emptiness of materialism. We also find that the developing countries that have attempted to copy the industrialization development strategy of the Western countries find that after thirty years of such policies, a meaningful development is still far away. The per capita income has not grown while property, unemployment and income inequality have grown tremendously. In short, we question and doubt very much the very concepts of development growth and related issues. In the light of the above facts, Gandhian Economic system provides a fruitful and fertile area for research and fresh thinking and dynamic approach to the present crisis. Gandhian Economic ideas and viewpoints do present a complete, fully articulated and integrated basis to solve the modern economic problems against the neo-classical economic framework and structure. Above all, Gandhian Economic system has to be studied from the viewpoint of his own moral and spiritual principles and ideals, as also from the conditions that existed and still exist in India. Gandhiji viewed life as a whole

and not as divided into separate watertight compartments. All the facts of man's life can be unified, if one set of moral values is applied to them all. If the same moral values and rules are not applied to all human activities - including economic life the net result will be conflicts and tensions within the individual and in the society.

Mahatma Gandhi never claimed to be an economist in the usual sense of the term. But his writings reveal that he had his own conception of economics. His spirituality never compelled him to renounce the other aspects of life. The central concept in Gandhian economics is man and not the material wealth. The mad race after money and material goods have thrown the world into the whirlpool of callous exploitation, ugly imperialism, and bloody carnage, conflicts and tensions in all parts of the world.

Shriman Narayan in his book *Relevance of Gandhian Economics* says that there are four corner stones on which Gandhian economics stands. They are 'simplicity', non-violence, 'sanctity of labour' and 'Human values'. Gandhiji built his ideal economy on the basis of decentralisation and village industries which aim towards the self sufficient and self - reliant villages.

Simplicity, is the first fundamental principle of Gandhian economics. Gandhiji did not identify progress with increased complexity. To him, a progressive economic system should lead to greater simplicity, through fuller life. The real wealth of the nation consists in the honest, cultured and unselfish men and women, and not in the huge buildings, big factories and luxuries. Gandhiji never agreed with the western industrial civilization which emphasises the need for multiplication of human needs. In his *Hind Swaraj* he says that the mind is like the wandering bird and there is no end for its ambition. For Gandhiji, the direction of development is not towards infinite progress but is towards limitation of wants.

The second basic principle of Gandhian economic thought is non-violence. Non-violence is the key concept in Gandhian philosophy. He tried to solve all the human problems, both in the present and in the future through non violence. For Gandhiji non-violence is not a simple technique, which helps one to solve immediate problems but non-violence is the law of life and the way of life towards the future evolution of humankind. "India's destiny", says Gandhiji, "lies not along the bloody way of the west which she showing sign of tiredness; but along the bloodless way of peace that comes from a simple and godly life' *Young India*, 7-10-1926. The third important principle underlying Gandhian economic thought is dignity and sanctity of manual labour. He learned from John Ruskin's *Unto This Last* that work of a barber and the work of a lawyer are the same. 'Bread labour', therefore, was to Gandhi an article of faith and he insisted that in an ideal society of his conception, everyone must have adequate scope for eight hours work and eight hours leisure for other social and cultural pursuits - this according to him was ideal distribution of time.

The fourth fundamental basis of Gandhian economics is a change in the standard of values. Human life is meaningful only if it is based upon certain values. Without values life is meaningless. Only in the valuational aspect, human

life is different from the lower form of life. If proper values are there in human beings, his life will flourish. Improper values lead man to confusion. If man lives for the sake of his food and shelter, animals are living a good life than human beings. But man must live for the higher values like, truth, goodness and beauty. In Gandhian way of life these values predominate.

Ethical Patterns of Economic Life

Addressing a college economics society in back as 1916, Gandhiji declared, "I venture to think that the scriptures of the world are safer and sounder treatises on laws of economics than many of the moder text-books on economics". Thus he drew no distinction between economics and ethics. In his autobiography, in 1921, he wrote, "Economics that hurts the moral weel-being of an individual or a nation is immoral and therefore sinful". He repeated his belief in the columns of *Young India* in 1924 in the following words. "That economics is untrue which ignores or disregards moral values". After thirteen years writing in the *Harijan* in 1937, he observed, "True economics never militate against the highest ethical standard' just as all true ethics to be worth its name must at the same time be also good economis. An economics that inculcates mammon worship and enables the strong to amass wealth at the expense of the weak, is a false and dismal science. It spells death. "True economis on the other hand, stands for social justice and promotes the good of all equally, including the weakest and is indispensable for decent life". This profound concern for the ethical ordering of economic life led Mahatma Gandhi to advocate a number of criteria in the economic field. Those standards were influenced by Gandhiji's own ethical ideas, his belief in God and his interpretation of God's purpose, his emphasis on the need for making nonviolence the basis and end of all human activity, his conviction about the importance of manual work or bread labour and above all his profound belief in equality for all human beings. Thus, Gandhiji denounced the principle of the unlimited character of human wants as the determinant of economic progress. In the words of Gandhiji, "I do not believe that multiplication of wants and machinery contrived to supply them is taking the world a single step nearer its goal... "I whole - heartedly detest this mad desire to destroy distance and time, to increase animal appetites and go to the ends of the earth in search of their satisfaction. If modern civilization stands for all this and I have understood it to do so, I call it Satanic".

Gandhiji recognised that modern industry based on machinery and catering for the fulfilment of increasing and ever-expanding human wants did lead to an enormous increase in the production of material goods and services and the accompanying evils of industrialisation. He also agreed that modern industry presented an attractive and rosy picture to the majority of human beings, the bulk of whom were not even able to satisfy the elementary needs of their existence like food, clothing and shelter. Therefore, Gandhiji was in favour of an economic system that gave to all human beings the means to satisfy their minimum material needs. To quote Gandhiji "The mind is a restless bird. The more it gets the more it wants and still remain unsatisfied... the ideal of creating an ulimited number of wants and satisfying them seems to be a delusion and a share... civilization in the real sense of the term consists, not in the multiplication but in the deliberate and voluntary reduction of wants". Gandhiji also asserted that he

was against large-scale production only of those things that villagers can produce without difficulty. In conclusion, the machinery method is harmful, when the same thing can be done easily by millions of hands not otherwise occupied. Writing in the *Harijan* dated 16-11-1934 Gandhiji observed, "Mechanisation is good when the hands are too few for the work intended to be accomplished. It is an evil when there are more hands than require for the work, as is the case in India. The problem with us is not how to find leisure for the teeming millions in our villages. The problem is how to utilise their idle hours which are equal to the working days of six months in the year".

In his search towards the eternal Truth, Gandhiji entered into the Indian freedom struggle movement, in 1909, he published a small book *Hind Swaraj* or *India Home Rule*, in which he stated that the true civilization is not the industrialised civilization but that civilization which helps for the moral and spiritual development of man. According to Mahatma Gandhi, the real civilization must be based upon ethical and spiritual religion. When talking about the India's slavery to the Western people, he said that the Europeans are business people, and they came to India to do business. Politics and government are secondary to them. Because of the Westerner's the village industries were killed. The calm self-sufficient villages were exploited by the people in the cities and by the Western rulers. Gandhiji used the swadeshi principle as a weapon against the western rulers.

To get Swaraj, Gandhiji asked people not to use the western products but to use the local products, According to Gandhiji each and every man must produce the needs of his own. If this is not possible he must reduce his needs to the minimum. Gandhiji approached the economic problems not like theoreticians. Naturally his solutions are also practical, and immediate. When modern technology introduced high machineries, Gandhiji reacted not like the professional politicians or the theoretical economists. He declared the result of the introduction of these machineries would ruin the spirit of Indian life. Today's heavy unemployment prove the validity of Gandhiji's vision which most of us are lacking.

When we are studying the economic ideas of Mahatma Gandhi it is better to read the original writings of Mahatma Gandhi. In the *Hind Swaraj* he explained the economic ideas. True pleasure comes from simple life. The problem with the present civilization is, it increases the wants. Pleasure is a state of mind. It never comes from the possession of material things. Gandhiji never accepted the centralised economy. When he read the *Unto This Last* of Ruskin he got insights into the economic sphere.

Gandhiji closely observed the poor condition of the Indians. The unemployment and the other sufferings are due to laziness and carelessness. He remarked that we classified works and made some jobs inferior and the rest superior. Thus arose the problem of differences and distinctions between the rich and poor, high or low. The modern man does not think that the physical work is superior to mental work. According to Gandhiji, physical work is a must for everyone. Without physical work one must have no right to eat, So in this ashrams and other institutions he emphasised the importance of physical work or manual labour.

Gandhiji considered that economics to be false which ignored moral values. He judged everything from the point of the well being of the individual, and the society.

Some Basic Concepts in Gandhian Economics

It is interesting to note that the Gandhian system has never been fully articulated. Most of his ideas were practised by Gandhiji himself. J.D. Sethi, in his interesting book *Gandhi To-day* suggests six concepts and they are (1) Truth (2) Satyagraha (3) Non-violence (4) Equality (5) Swadeshi (6) Bread-labour. In general, there are six essential concepts and they are related to each other and they all have equal importance and it is interesting that these six concepts come in pairs of two and they are as follows: a) Swadeshi (b) Bread Labour (c) Aparigraha or non-possession (d) Trusteeship (e) Non-exploitation (f) Equality, Swadeshi may be translated as self-reliance and bread labour provides the ethical dimension to Swadeshi at the level of personal action. One cannot be self-reliant. If one cannot produce the necessities of living by one's own labour. Non possession follows from truth and non-violence and the Gandhian concept of theft is based on aparigraha. As such any one who possess things and objects not needed by others is a thief. Trusteeship follows from and is built on the concept of non-possession, which may be considered as a form of non-violence. It is interesting to note that non-exploitation follows naturally from the concept and principle of non-violence, since one cannot generally exploit without doing violence. Some critics maintain that both Marxist and Capitalistic societies have institutionalized exploitation especially in the production of goods and services. Lastly, equality follows from and ensures non-exploitation, since exploitation among equals is not generally possible. In conclusion equality in the Gandhian system involves all possible achievable equality and it is something more than equality of opportunity.

Production and Technology in Gandhian Economics

It is interesting to note that in the capitalistic industrialized societies, there is large scale production of both basic goods and non-basic goods. In the total output, the non-basic goods form a larger part. Since production is defined by profit of growth motives, the emphasis is on the production of non-basic goods. In Gandhian societies, the emphasis is on the production of basic goods and the motivation for this emphasis comes both from sheer needs, as well as from moral and ethical considerations like love, humanism and respect. The basic sources of cost subsidization in capitalistic and neo-Marxist societies lies in the prevalence and encouragement of an exploitative production and technological structure. The technology in both these systems encourage and imposes production modes, which require specialization and large scale organisations. However, in the Gandhian system the production modes cannot be exploitative by its very nature. The technological change, out of necessity has to satisfy the following three major conditions.

- 1) Technology must increase the productivity of the worker.
- 2) Technology must not replace the worker.
- 3) The workers must have complete control on the technology.

In the light of the above facts, it is wrong to believe that Gandhiji was against modern technology. In fact, Gandhiji had no objection to the use of mechanical power to increase production and diminish the drudgery of workers. The only conditions were that such mechanical powers must be available to every villager, who want to use it and machinery must be used in a restricted manner to produce goods of necessity and not throw away men out of employment and make them starve. They must not exploit the villages or compete with village craft. On the other hand, modern machinery must help the village artisans to reduce their drudgery and improve their efficiency. Further, they must not tend to make atrophied the limbs of men and women. Above all, they must not lead to monopoly or concentration of wealth-power in a few hands and strictly avoid exploitation both at national and international levels and when large capital or large number of employees are involved, they must be owned by the state and administered wholly for the public good. Writing in the *Harijan* dated 27-1-1940, Gandhiji declared I do visualise electricity, ship building and iron-works machine-making and the like existing side by side with village handicrafts. Hitherto Industrialization has been so planned as to destroy the village and village crafts. In the state of future, it will subserve the villages and their crafts."

Gandhiji derived his economic thought from the ancient Indian texts like *Vedas*, *Upanishads* and *Gita*. In ancient economic thought of India the centre of activities is man and not wealth. Economics and ethics are interdependent. The western industrialisation has done greatest harm to the Indian way of life. The irrational imitation of the western industrial civilization killed the village industries. That is why Gandhiji emphasised self-sufficiency and self-reliance in the economy. Gandhian economy is village-oriented and tries to strengthen the villages by its products.

The economy of self-sufficiency aimed by Gandhi was achieved to a great extent when millions of people started not only spinning but also wearing the rough hand woven cloth. It is not difficult to see at the economics of self sufficiency preached by Gandhiji takes its origin in the two principles of his philosophy non possession and non stealing that no one should have more than that he really needs and no one should exploit others and have private property. To Gandhiji, "the whole gamut of man's activities, to-day constitutes an indivisible whole, and social, economic, political and purely religious work cannot be divided into water-tight compartments (*Young India*, Vol., III, p.350). This synthetic view of life led him to think and express about economics as well. He formulated some principle on which the economic organisation should be based. Gandhiji never wrote any treatise on economics but read some treatises on economics, "I am not an economist, but I have read some treaties. Of those books, the one that brought about an instantaneous and practical transformation in my life was *Unto This Last*, I translated it latter into Gujarati, entitling Sarvodaya-the welfare of all" (*My experiments With Truth*, Part IV, Chap XVIII). During the last imprisonment in Aga Khan Palace, Poona, 1942, out of courtesy to his socialist friends he decided to read Karl Marx's *Capital*. At the end of that herculean feat of endurance, he quietly remarked. "I think I could have written it better assuming, of course, that I had the leisure for the study he has put in ".

Gandhiji wanted to bring about a change through a gradual process by non-violent means beginning with the off quoted institution of 'trusteeship'. His idea of capital and labour was that both should supplement and help each other. Gandhiji arrived at his theory of trusteeship through the study of *Bhagavath Gita* and Snell's *Principle of Equality*. All forms of property and human accomplishments are either gifts of nature or products of social living. As such, they belong not to the individual but to the society and therefore should be used for the good of all.

Gandhiji sighed a decentralised economic order in order to avoid the dangers of communism and capitalism. His conception of freedom is not merely in the political but also in other fields of human activities like economics, education, family etc. The political problem was taken up by Gandhiji first and even in the political struggle he fought through economics. When he was fighting against the western rules, he also thought about those rich people who exploit the poor people. In fact, he had a programme with him to fight against the rich people of India of course in a non-violent way.

Like all original thinkers, Gandhiji was gifted with a larger vision. His economic theory spells out a solution to the problems both immediate and ultimate. Gandhian economic philosophy gains added significance, when we take note of the fact that he laid tremendous emphasis on the ethical aspect of the problem. "I must confess" said Gandhiji. "That I do not draw a sharp or any distinction between economics and ethics". The emphasis on the ethical aspect distinguishes economic philosophy of Gandhi from that of Marshall, Marx or Keynes. While Karl Marx emphasises on class struggle, Gandhiji stresses class co-ordination.

In the midst of his extraordinarily busy life, struggling with intense political activity, besides the maintenance of his ashram and the care of it, Gandhiji was being constantly confronted by economic questions, seeking answers from or solutions by him. The first time when the occasion of the opening of Benares Hindu University on 6th February, 1916. Gandhiji in the course of his speech said, I compare with the rich and noble men the millions of the poor. And I feel like saying to those noble, there is no salvation for India unless you strip yourselves of this jewellery and hold it trust for your countryment in India.

Central idea in Gandhian economic thinking was firm conviction that a non-violent, i.e., free from exploitation, economy cannot be built on centralised "factory civilization". This does not mean that Gandhiji was against machinery as such. In the *Hind Swaraj* he clearly declared that he was against man being the slave to his own product, that is machine. He says that the very physical body is a fine machine given by nature for the benefit of the world. The very charka is a machine. He prefers machines like Singer's sewing machine. In the name of industrialisation, lot of exploitation is going on. The hard working workers are getting very little as profits and they work for the benefit of somebody. The few owners are getting a lot of wealth in the name of profit. The poor villages are exploited by the cities and industrialised countries are exploiting the poor countries. The poor countries are the markets for the highly developed countries, So Gandhiji was a

man who stood for freedom of man. He wished to see a society-which is profitless, povertyless and personal propertyless society-which he named as *Ramarajya*. Gandhian economic ideas have an integral relationship with his ideal of godly life. Throughout his writings he again and again makes it clear that, what does not promote spiritual growth is harmful, and can usefully be done away with.

Gandhian economic philosophy with its moral basis is not only suitable to India but to the present day world. The great economic thinkers like Gunnar Myrdal and Schumacher clearly show in the books that Gandhian economic model is the best model for the whole of humankind to-day and tomorrow. In his book *Asian Drama*, Gunnar Myrdal reflects the problems of the third world and indicates that Gandhian way is the only alternative. Schumacher in his book, *Small is beautiful*, shows that Gandhian economics can be the best solution to the present day problems of humankind. Similar studies from the Club of Rome (*Limits to Growth*) shows that the western industrialised economics is not fit for the human of to-day and tomorrow.

Gandhian economics is organic in character. It believes in a life which is in tune with nature. The Western economics wants to conquer and subordinate nature, and it has led to the present environmental problems. Today, if humankind manages to survive by avoiding nuclear wars, it is likely to be destroyed by environmental pollution.

Sparing use of rarely available non-renewable resources, recycling, production of basic needs and non-exploitation are the most modern aspects of Gandhian economics. Today, we want bread and butter not bullets and guns, Mahatma Gandhi asked the most fundamental question what are the products we are going to produce? Today what are the things produced by the major multi-national companies—destructive arms, harmful drinks and cigarettes, luxurious goods and questionable medicines. Gandhi wanted to produce things which are absolutely essential for human life and not harmful to humanity. Thus his system, will stand for the abolition of existing production pattern of nations.

Colonialism and imperialism and Neo-colonialism of both the American and Soviet models mainly depend on exploitation of the weaker sections within one's own country and much more outside their respective countries (and especially of the poor countries). Unless this vicious exploitation is broken, Imperialism will thrive. Self-sufficiency, and self-reliance, swadeshi and simple life are the way out. In such a state of affairs, markets will tend to be more and more local and small.

Today, money and markets and machinery are the major factors. In Gandhian economics all these will lose their current significance and they will be relegated to their due "back benches". These triple evils have corrupted modern man beyond almost redemption.

Gandhi's life itself was a good exposition of his economic concept. He led an amazingly simple and richly moral life with very little consumption of goods. His

wants were simple and limited. He did manual work and was self-dependent. He did not waste anything not even a piece of paper or a small pencil. He cleaned the toilet and nursed leprosy patients.

Conclusion

We are well acquainted with the fact of simple truth that man has usages and the economic usage is one, however basic it may be. It is also true that an individual's life would indeed be bleak and insipid, if he lacked the minimum requirements of a civilized and cultured life. However, if economic competence is necessary for the happiness and progress of an individual as well as a group or community, freedom is also necessary and so are moral and spiritual values. Jesus Christ truly said, "Man does not live by bread alone". But, it is also a fact that he cannot live without it either. Matter may be less important than the spirit. But, in human beings the spirit manifests itself and works through the flesh. Further, freedom is the very essence of our being and it is a primary and essential condition or factor for the progress of the individual, the group and the nation. In the light of these factors, Kari Marx's conception of economic activity and modes of production as deciding factors in the life of an individual and the group is only a partial truth and that economic life or activity cannot dispense with moral values or ethical standards is also a fact of life. In Gandhiji's philosophy of life, there is no place for economic classes as maintained by Karl Marx or of an economic man as held by classical economists. In short, they are mere abstractions. These activities are necessary not only for the existence of man, but also for his happiness and progress. Man lives in society and all his activities concern not only the individual in isolation but they create social relations. As a matter fact all wealth is socially produced and this is Gandhiji's view on Robinson Crusoe on a solitary island, whether a capitalist or a labourer can produce wealth. So Gandhiji held that socially produced wealth must be equally divided among all those, who are instrumental in producing the same. In the words of Gandhi "Everybody should be able to get sufficient work to enable him to make two ends meet. And this ideal can be universally realized, only if the means of production of the elementary necessities of life remain in the control of masses. They should be freely available to all as God's air and water are ought to/ought to be..... Their monopolisation by any country, group or nation would be unjust. The neglect of this simple principle is the cause of the destitution that we witness to-day not only in this unhappy land but in other parts of the world too".

APPENDIX

A comparative and critical study of Neo-classical and Gandhian system of Economics under the headings a) Consumption b) Production c) Distributive Theory will indicate the merits and demerits of both the systems. For easy reference and clear-cut indications tabular column is used as mentioned below.

Consumption

Neo-classical	Gandhian
1) Resources are limited and wants are insatiable.	Resources are abundant enough to satisfy needs of all in a comfortable way
2) Consumer's goal is to maximize utility.	Consumer's goal is to satisfy needs.
3) Consumption is budget determined	Consumption is need-determined.
4) Multiplicity of material wants has no upper bound.	Restraint on material wants the aim of life.
5) Utility function of multiple wants has no upper bound.	Utility function of multiple wants has an upper bound defined by necessary.
6) Individual utility functions are independent of each other.	Individual utility functions inter dependent.
7) Social utility function is maximized through maximization of individual utility functions.	Social utility function is maximized through maximization of number of economically satisfied individual.

Production

Neo-classical	Gandhian
1) Multiplicity and the quantity of the production of material goods are the goals of the economic activity.	To provide work for the body and to satisfy the economic needs of the society so that its member can fulfil themselves within a harmonious society. In other words, the goal is the progress.
2) G.N.P. and ever-rising standards of living is the measure of success.	Absence of starvation among the masses is the measure of success.
3) The Problem is to produce the products, which would fetch the highest rate of return and utility is directly related to the price.	Goods which would satisfy the basic need have to be produced. Since consumption and production are localised the value of the products is determined by the labour value rather than the exchange value. The profit motive is absent.

4) Lease-cost-combination is the technique to produce goods.	Full employment of the voluntary bread labour is the motto.
5) How much to produce is restricted only by the production capacity. growth.	Constrained by the individual needs and a society desirable level, which would not hinder individual's total
6) Industrialization is a boon.	industrialization is a curse.
7) Capital is absolutely essential	Only if it aids human beings.
8) Technology is absolutely essential. used by the masses.	Only, if it is simple and can be
9) Labour is commodity of productions; to be exploited.	A source of human power which must be utilized for the benefit of its owners. It is the fundamental law of our being that we must work for our bread and it is voluntary and not exploitable.
10) All our products have exchange value which derived from the interplay of the supply and demand.	Only bread labour has value, which is derived form the individual's need to maintain healthy body, mind and soul.
11) $MRC = MRP$ is the formula in case of employment.	Full employment, regardless of cost.

Distribution Theory

Neo-classical	Gandhian
1) There is market for factors of Production.	There is no market for factors of production.
2) Entrepreneur corporation brings the factors together for the production by buying various factors.	Trustees bring together agents and factors of production by example and co-operation.
3) The relationship is of employer-employees.	The relation is one of trustees and co-operative workers.
4) Workers are paid their wages.	There is no wage-labour.

- 5) Wages are paid on the basis of marginal productivity.
- 6) There is income from the employment of capital and this is appropriated by the capital-owners.
- 7) Capital is owned by the capitalists.
- 8) Risks of productions are taken by the capitalists.
- 9) Capitalists substitute capital for labour in order to maximise profits and this substitution is infinite.
- 10) Investments are made by the Capitalists out of income from capital and for future profits.
- 11) Investments are made by residuals, after other costs are paid.
- 12) These are various prices, short-run, long-run, etc. These differ from each other.
- 13) Short term prices are determined by demand.
- 14) Long-term prices are determined by average cost, where cost are defined by the capitalists.
- 15) Distribution is unequal.
- 16) Production and distribution are channelled by economic incentives.

There are no wages. Every one shares in the total output equally.

There are no incomes accruing to capital and capital once installed, is maintained without generating incomes.

Capital is owned by the community.

Risks are taken by the community as a whole.

The Capital-labour substitution is zero and there is no substitution between capital and worker, as long as it leads to displacement of workers. The function of capital is to enhance productivity, without replacing worker and diminishing the humaneness of the work.

Investment is made by the community as a joint decision to improve the quality of life in the Community.

Investment decisions are made from total output and remuneration to workers and trustees are from the residuals.

There is only one price implicit in the long-run.

Short-term allocations are determined by need and equality.

Long-term prices are determined by defined average costs. The costs are however defined by the community.

Equality is the essence of the system.

Economic incentives are replaced by trusteeship.

Let us present a recent table of Prof. Guy De Malle.

FOUR APPLICATIONS/IMPLEMENTATIONS OF NONVIOLENCE

A. Nonviolent Economics

Problem : In Our World

The weak and the poor are crushed under the weight of harsh living and working conditions. Alienated labour, scarcity, non-availability of work. Capital intensive growth that alienates labour.

Big Impersonal and Alienating

Gross inequality in distribution of resources. Extremes of poverty and wealth.

Nonviolent Solutions

1. Love with Justice
"As long as there is poverty
I can never be rich".
- Martin Luther King

2. Bread labour; Right livelihood.

3. Simplicity of lifestyle; frugality as international ideal.
4. Give the right to (fulfilling) work; foster self-help autonomy.

5. SHARE; Practice Trusteeship.

6. Appropriate (intermediate) technology. Question and reconsider the trend toward maximum industrialization.

An appropriate, some extent of deindustrialization.

"Small is Beautiful"

(E.F. Schumacher)

7. *Swadeshi*: local/regional self-sufficiency, decentralization
8. Right ecology: nurturing the environment
9. Economic conversion : Jobs for Peace.

Village Organisation

Introduction

It is rather paradoxical the India's teeming millions permanently committed to the village civilization have yet to come to their own in terms of their real independence and the decentralized power must devote itself on the constitutionally restructured village units. In olden days village Panchayats worked extensively and efficiently in the entire country. As early as 1912 Gopalakrishna Gokhale reflected the informal thinking of the times and emphasized in his characteristic way the need for local self-government and empowering village panchayats, not only as an instrument of rural welfare. In the words of Prof. B.N. Ganguly, "Gopalakrishna Gokhale believed in the grass roots of self-government formed by the village units..... Our real local self-government should start with villages and stop with sub-districts. The District Board may exercise only general supervising and co-ordinating functions". In 1945, Gandhiji wrote to Jawaharlal Nehru as follows: "I am convinced that if India is to attain true freedom and through India the world also then sooner or later, the fact must be recognised that people will have to live in small face to face communities or in villages..... My ideal village will contain intelligent human beings. They will not live in dirt and dirtiness as animals. Men and women will be free and able to hold their own against anyone in the world. No one will be idle, no one will wallow in luxury. Every one will have to contribute his / her own quota of manual labour..... The unit of society should be a village or call it a small and manageable group of people who would in the ideal, be self-sufficient in the matter of their vital needs, as a unit and bound together in bonds of mutual co-operation and inter dependence. "All students of political science repeat the definition of democracy as the government of the people by the people and for the people. We find that all existing forms of democratic rule can be styled to be to a certain extent of the people and for the people, none can be said to be directly by the people. The state governs and the society is governed. The most interesting topic is what can be the basic unit of society, which can articulate people's power in an organised and democratic way? According to Gandhiji, Vinoba Bhave and Jayaprakash Narayan, the Indian village that has persisted a living cultural entity through the ages and also as the nucleus or as the best basis of a truly democratic structure, requires well planned infrastructure and organisation and in the final analysis is the edified for peace, progress and prosperity.

India lives in its village and not in the cities. The village life in India is traditional and simple. If one wants to know the Indian civilization, culture and religion, he / she must go to villages of India. It is unfortunate that the social structure in these villages is corrupted and the life of the city is flourishing at the cost of these villages. In order to feed the city people, hundreds of villages are producing, working and suffering. Gandhiji wished to see exploitationless social structure and truthful people. So he idealised the India with full of village centres. The rural society he idealised was progressive, growing and dynamic. Self-sufficiency is not merely individual's ideal but also applicable to the rural society.

It is very remarkable that Gandhiji aspired to realize a village community throughout his life and the first attempts were made in South Africa at Phoenix Settlement and Tolstory Farm and more lasting attempts were made in India at Sabarmati and Sevagram ashrams. In April 1936, Gandhiji decided to live in a village, which would enable him to appreciate the difficulties and problems of the villages better and that would also be a laboratory for his experiments in his village organisation work and in revitalising rural India. Mirabehn was already living and working in a nearby village called Segaoow. Gandhiji selected this village for his residence and renamed it Sevagram. It was a small backward village with six hundred inhabitants, a cluster of huts with no roads or post office. It soon became an important centre of various social activities and it was from this village that Gandhiji enunciated and announced his new educational system and latter founded the Talimi Sangh. In Sevagram, Gandhiji's main task was to teach the villagers to raise their own standard of living and to be self-sufficient through their own efforts. Some important problems like rural indebtedness and the reform of tenancy laws were discussed and Gandhiji wanted the villagers to do whatever could be done by them through their own efforts to improve their conditions for instance improve village sanitation. With this objective, he made the villagers to experiment on different systems of drainage and disposal of Parbage by cheap methods suited to rural conditions. In short, Gandhiji's ideal was to make every village self-sufficient in the necessities of life and establish village republics and every villager to lead a simple, active and purposeful life. So that inequalities in income and in standards of living could be toned down and distinctions of the rich and poor, high or low could be abolished and Sarvodaya society based on truth and non-violence and free from injustice, inequalities and exploitation could easily be established.

Gandhiji observed extraordinary poverty in the villages. Because of the alien government and the rulers, the Indian social structure lost its original spirit. The suffering and sorrows went to the villages. The self sufficient calm villagers lost the independent nature and the cities control the villages. In order to give them the new (which is the oldest set up) Gandhiji introduced innumerable programmes. He introduced Khadi and Village Industries programmes in order to promote the village's economic life. Gandhiji realised that the world peace is possible only through the small village structure in which there is no place for exploitation and corruption. So he tried the level best to break down the existing social structure and built up a new structure. That ideal society, Ramarajya of Mahatma Gandhiji, is based upon villages and their prosperity and progress.

Gandhiji aimed at the village swaraj. It is not the withering away of the state but "scattering of the state" when he recommends village model for the future world community. He is not against machinery. He was against the craze for the machines. He was anxious to provide full employment to every able bodied citizen and maintained that this objective could be achieved only by village organisation and cottage industries in the country side in an efficient manner. For Mahatma Gandhiji, political power was not an end in itself but one of the means for enabling people to better their conditions in every sphere of life. This is impossible if the present structure and conditions continue. We need human centered, life centered but not the machine centered or wealth centered village organisation.

Gandhiji's aim was not merely the freedom of India and freedom of a group of people but his aim was to free human from all the structures that chain humankind. His aim is the complete free human. For that he wished a new structure which is based upon love and truth. This structure is the village organisation, which is based upon human relation and truth. World peace, Gandhiji believed, is possible only by the decentralised small units. Mahatma Gandhiji strongly pleaded for decentralisation of economic and political power through the organisation of village panchayats. He always upheld the ideal of plain living and worked for a higher standard of life, not merely for a higher standard of living. "Civilization, in the real sense of the term", remarks Gandhiji, "consists not in the multiplication but in the deliberate and voluntary restrictions of wants". He aimed for a complete independence (*Poorna Swaraj*) of human. That is possible only through the change in the individual and social structure. Complete independence will be complete only to the extent of our approach in practice to truth and non-violence and social structure must be based upon village republics.

The experience of humankind rectifies to the fact that collective life is more genial, varied and fruitful, when it is concentrated in small units and simpler organisations. Gandhiji wanted true democracy to function in India. He, therefore observed, "True democracy cannot be worked by twenty men sitting at the centre. It has to be worked from below by the people of every villages, Gandhi suggested that the hope of the future world order lies in the villages, that is in small peaceful co-operatives, where there is no compulsion, no force but where all activities are carried on the voluntary co-operation. The present city civilization is based upon industrial civilization which breeds violence and corruption. This is not suitable to India, which has its own civilization".

Gandhiji declared that the exploitation of the villages by the cities is a kind of organised violence. The city development is not original to India. If the city civilization grows, the villages will collapse. Gandhiji lived for the reconstruction of the Indian villages on a self-growing, self-sufficient, egalitarian, self-continued and spiritually oriented basis as the foundation for the political, economical, cultural and spiritual growth of the country. Gandhiji wanted the villages to be completely self-sufficient regarding food and clothing. One must not misunderstand Gandhiji's self-sufficiency principle as a narrow one, since there is no scope for selfishness and arrogance in his self sufficiency.

When Gandhiji advocated the village republics, he not only meant it for India but to the whole. He says, "I regard the growth of cities as an evil thing unfortunate for the world, unfortunate for England and certainly unfortunate for India. The British have exploited India through its cities. The latter have exploited the villages. The blood of the villages is the cement with which the edifice of the city is built. I want the blood today inflating the arteries of the cities to run once again in the blood vessel of the villages".

(*Harijan*, 23-6-46)

Today, the Indian villages are suffering with so many problems. The ideal village is still to evolve. According to Mahatma Gandhiji the ideal village be so constructed as to lend itself to perfect sanitation. It will have cottages with

sufficient light and ventilation built of a material obtainable within a radius of five miles. The cottages will have courtyards enabling householders to plant vegetables for domestic use and to house their cattle. The village lanes and streets will be free of all avoidable dust. It will have wells according to its needs and accessible to all, it will have houses of worship for all, also a common meeting place, a village common field for grazing its cattle a co-operative dairy, primary and secondary schools in which industrial education will be the central fact, and it will have Panchayats for settling disputes. It will produce its own grains, vegetables and fruits, and its own khadi. Gandhi asked his followers to go to the village, and work for the ideal village, because non-violent society is possible only by villages.

Village represents a significant stage in the evolution of human civilization. The gregarious instinct among human beings, the common danger from wild beasts and the recognition of necessity and usefulness of mutual help and co-operation of all these factors favoured the rise of mutual help and co-operation. And these factors favoured the rise of compact village communities. Only in the village we have chances for every body to work. The bread labour philosophy which T.B. Bondaref and Leo Tolstoy practised was possible only through the village organism. There is no place for beggary in a village organism, because there is possibility for every-body to work.

Arnold Toynbee the great historian analysed history of different civilizations and observed that the Indian and the Chinese civilizations are great and still living. These civilizations flourished in the villages of ancient India and China. Civilizations arose and declined only with two exceptions of China and India. The main reason for the decline of civilizations as pointed out by Lewis Mumford, is undue importance given to the cities. Modern civilizations of the east and the west are committing the same mistake. If the cities of India flourished the great Indian civilization will be destroyed within few years. The villages are the proper places for the true development of civilizations.

The city life resulted in dehumanization, rootlessness and alienation. As a result of the long city life with its noise pollution, air pollution and water pollution, people in the west are going back to the sea-shores and valleys in order to get peace of mind. Go-back to the villages is the recent slogan in the western society. Gandhiji-realised these dangers long ago. He wished each and every village to have a republic of its own, He says, "Independence must begin at bottom. Thus every village will be a republic of Panchayat having full powers. It follows therefore that every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs even to the extent of defending itself against the whole world".

(*Harijan*, 28-7-46)

The exploitation of the village by the cities began long ago. But in recent times it is alarming. As the best qualities of raw material, food, clothing etc., produced in the village were carried to the cities. In return all the unwanted things like toxic drinks are supplied to the villages. Thus was vividly explained by the Gandhiji even in 1945 as "The poor villagers are exploited by the foreign government and also by their own country men the city dwellers. They produce the food and go hungry. They

produce milk and their children have to go without it. It is disgraceful', (*Harijan*, March 31, 1946) Dr. J.C. Kumarappa the Gandhian economist clearly reveals in his writing what is wrong with Indian economics. According to Dr. J.C. Kumarappa the village based economics is the solution to our present problems.

It is interesting to note that Gandhi's opposition to the multiplication of wants was linked to his love and attachment to the Indian villages and their traditional way of life and for non-violent society in village republics. Further, Gandhi asserted that industrialisation on a mass scale would necessarily lead to passive or active exploitation of the villages. Writing in *Hind Swaraj* he declared, "Under my scheme, nothing will be allowed to be produced by the cities which can equally well be produced by villages. The proper function of cities is to serve as clearing houses for village products". Throughout his life, Gandhiji was drawn by his visions of rural civilization, where men and women in small groups would be self-sufficient in meeting their elementary needs and yet inter-dependent for many items for which sanction of non-violence with its technique of Satyagraha and non co-operation for both orderly and civilized life and defence against external forces.

Gandhiji wanted that the village panchayat should function only under a law of its own making. So one of the foremost problems of decentralization is to make the panchayats of the villages function as spontaneous training grounds in village republicanism and community democracy. The ideal of Sarvodaya society is the realization of the village self-government and the exercise of all political authority by the village. Jayaprakash Narayan in his interesting book, *Towards a New Society* tells us that Grama Swaraj is the result of two important precedents; a) gramdan b) gram *Sampalka* or village self-sufficiency and asserts that the surest foundations of democracy in India would be the self-governing village units. In the words of Gandhiji, "In the structure composed ascending circles, life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But, it will be an oceanic circle, whose center will be the individual, always ready to perish for the village..... The outermost circle or circumstance will not wield power to crush the inner circles but will give strength to all within and derive strength from the inner circles. No one will be the first and none the last. The units are bound together in bonds of mutual co-operation and inter-dependence".

The village communities must be based on the kind of personal relation among its members, which makes the concept of Dharma or righteousness meaningful. In conclusion in the words of Bharatan Kumarappa "Villagism is nothing but socialism—socialism decentralised and free from violence and exploitation. Only thus, it would be seen that the socialist ideal of each for all and all for each can really be attained". In his article "Foundations of Sarvodaya society" Jayaprakash Narayan observed as follows: "Gandhiji spoke of self-governing and self-sufficient village republics. He taught us to visualise the village that does its won policing, settle its own disputes, looks after its sanitation, its education, its industries and its agriculture. He also spoke of establishing equality in the village societies. But, he did not make clear how that could be done. I consider villagisation of land, Gramdan and Gram *Sankalpa* to be the two pillars on which the edifice of Gramaraj can be established. The Gramaraj in turn would be the foundation of the Sarvodaya society of the future".

Mahatma further tells the Teachers

Gandhi wished to build a peaceful society in villages. For this purpose, he introduced the basic education. Nai Talim-basic education/new education - is the sure alternative to the existing decadent education system. The new person - the self-sufficient, self-reliant, nonviolent and ethical person - will emerge only from an alternative education system and not from the existing colonial and post-colonial education system. Commending on the teachers, Mahatma Gandhi says, "What we need is educationists with originality, fired with true zeal, who will think, from day to day what they are going to teach their pupils. He has to use his own faculties of observation and thinking and impart this knowledge to the children through his efforts and with the help of a craft. This means a revolution in the method of teaching, a revolution in the teacher outlook".

"Until now, you have been guided, by inspector's reports. You wanted to do what that inspector might like, so that you might get more money for your institution or higher salaries for yourselves. But, the new teacher will not care for all that. He will say. 'I have done my duty for my pupil. If I have made him a better man and in doing so I have used all my resources that is enough for me'.
(*Harijan*, 18.2.1939)

Gandhiji observed that the Indian villages were full of unhygienic conditions. In order to set right the conditions, Gandhiji developed a detailed programme for the villages to live in a hygienic condition. He advocated nature cure treatment for the healthy life of the villages. It is difficult for the government to appoint highly specialized doctors in villages. The villager's diseases are often mild and they are in need of good hygienic way of life and nutritious diet. So he emphasized a natural life for the villagers to solve their health problems. He wrote, spoke and did much for the promotion of nature cure. Mahatma Gandhi realised most of the disease may be prevented by leading a correct life style and creating a right environment. He insisted that our health care system should reflect this reality.

Gandhiji prescribed the qualifications and duties of the village protection committee members. This peace brigade is the alternative to the present police and military force. Peace brigade is based upon non-violence and it is must for the village organisation. Regarding the qualifications of every peace warrior, Gandhiji says that he must have strong faith in non-violence, equal regard for the different religions, local orientation, capacity to work independently, contact with everybody in the village, good character, working for peace, progress and prosperity. Gandhiji also prescribed different qualifications and restrictions for the village worker. Some of the qualification for the village worker is faith in God, belief in truth and non-violence, aparigraha (nonpossession) and trusteeship mentality, commitment to communal harmony, removal of untouchability and Khadi & Village Industries, etc.

Gandhiji advised the village workers to keep the eleven vows as their beacon light. The vows are non-violence, truth, non-stealing brahmacharya, non-possession, body labour, control of the palate, fearlessness, equal respect for all religions,

swadeshi (restricting oneself to the use and service or one's nearest surroundings in preference to those more remote) spirit of exclusive brother hood, Regarding the work in the village he says all the workers must stay in the respective villages and work for village sanitation, adult education, upliftment of women, removal of untouchability, religious unity, health, economic upliftment etc.

The Indian villages need selfless workers who can work with the spirit of service. The village work never gives much money. So Gandhiji advised the workers to live with the minimum needs and try to give more. Then only it is possible to get the village swaraj. He advised young Congress party members to go to the village as on a pilgrimage. Sincere work with the service mind is what needed in the villages.

Vinoba Bhave and Jayaprakash Narayan on Village Organization

It was Vinoba Bhave, who clearly had an insight into possibilities of people's power, when he launched his epoch making Bhoodan and gramdan movement. The four major premises of Vinoba's concept of Grama Swaraj and village organisation are as follows: 1) All judicial, administrative, municipal and educational responsibilities in the revenue jurisdiction of the village should belong to the gram-sabha or village assembly of which every adult living in the area is a member. 2) All agricultural land which is the primary instrument of production shall belong to the collective ownership of the village, with the right of re-distribution among the working class of the village. 3) Application of the principles of the economics of the family to the village community for total development, full employment and maximum opportunities for raising the quality of life 4) For all purposes of inter-relationships, between groups of villages between groups and districts units and upwards till the national level, the village community elects unanimously its own representatives without the interference of either the state or the political parties.

It is very remarkable that Jayaprakash Narayan developed the idea of Sarvodaya polity and village organisation a step further and revived the idea of the Lok Sevak Sangh that Gandhiji elaborated in his "Last Will and Testament". It is interesting to note that Gandhiji drafted his resolution for the A.I.C.C. on 29th January 1948, a day before his assassination at the hands of a Hindu fanatic, and in that resolution recommended dissolution of the Congress organisation and establishment of a body of voluntary workers merged in the villages and acting as rallying point for the people's power, so that real swaraj moves from the centre to the village level. Jayaprakash Narayan forged his ideas of people's polity as a positive alternative to the party and power politics that eroded the very foundations of democratic values. The cardinal and essential points are as follows: 1) An awakened village community is the best organically related social unit for working out a reconstruction for the base. 2) Organized people's power based on non-violence and satyagraha will be the best guarantee for non-erosion of democratic values. 3) Gram-sabha, Loka-samities, Lok Sangarsh Vashinis or youth organizations for revolutions and Lok Sevaks are the essential parts of a basic infrastructure for village organisation and *Lokaniti* 4) Accountability of all representatives to their constituencies and the right to recall their representatives by the voters (5) Parties disappear or fade away as power is decentralized and decision making

bodies are in direct contact with the people and their local origination for implementation of those decisions 6) Lastly, the state must convert itself into a federating mechanism of self-regulated communities, with responsibilities of shaping national policies and preserving national units. Writing in his thought provoking book, "*India of My Dreams*." Gandhiji observed, "Democracy should necessarily mean in essence the art and science of mobilizing the entire physical, economic and spiritual resources of all the various sections of the people in the service of the common good of all". These immortal words of Gandhiji were made more meaningful by Jayaprakash Narayan's crusade for village organization and for people's polity. In short it is the moral duty of every Indian to identify the force of people's power and work for the strong foundations of village organisation and for village Panchayat Raj and uproot the monster of concentrated power and the evils of mechanization from its grass roots and at the same time build up sarvodaya society based on truth, non-violence, non-exploitation, equality and justice to one and all, irrespective of caste, colour or creed.

The village swaraj of Mahatma Gandhiji is the Ramarajya. It is not a Hind Rajya but "kingdom of God on earth". It is not only for the welfare of India but of the welfare of the whole world. It is not merely freedom to Indian people but to humankind as a whole. In short Gandhian life style which is based on truth and non-violence, needs a social structure and that structure is the village structure.

Indian civilization survived for more than 4000 years continuously because of the basic creativity of the Indian villages. Most of the civilization, which lived for short periods brightly, disappeared. One important reason for this is the over emphasis on cities at the expense of the villages. Lewis Mumford in his celebrated work, *Cities in History* has stressed this point. Gandhi realized the prime significance of the villages and wanted to strengthen them.

He was quite aware of the present degraded conditions of the Indian villages with poverty, illiteracy, ignorance, insanitation, etc. But, still they were supplying us the basic necessities of life, food and raw materials including cheap labour. The cities and the colonists were exploiting them. The villages disintegrated because of this exploitation. Mahatma Gandhi wanted to rebuild the villages in India. His village is the village of the future, deeply rooted in history and tradition. It is not a repetition of the past but a glorious adventure from the past into the future. He called it *Ramraj*-the kingdom of God on Earth.

SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND SELF-RELIANCE

Self-Sufficiency

The individual, community, nation and the world would be self-sufficient. But absolute self-sufficiency is impossible. It is a relative concept. The village should be self-sufficient in its basic needs. Some items (e.g iron, salt, etc.,) may come from outside but equally something should be given in return. Then only there will be a balance. If the village gives (exports) more and takes in (imports) less, then that would lead to exploitation, accumulation of wealth and dominance. If it

is the other way about (export less and import more), then that would lead to poverty, weakness and colonization. This is as well true of the nation states. India was a self-sufficient nation when the Europeans came to India. Only after ruining this happy self-sufficiency, British could colonize us. Mahatma Gandhi realized the way to *Swaraj* is to achieve self-sufficiency. Mere political independence without self-sufficiency will only be an illusion. Many African and Latin American countries have become independent but still they largely depend on their ex-colonial masters and thus they are still under colonial bonds.

Gandhi believed that the village (small communities) should be the basic unit is related to his concept of *swadeshi* (neighbourliness). It strengthens interpersonal relationship, face to face communities and decentralization and tends to eliminate mass culture, centralisation and alienation.

Self-sufficiency is a multi dimensional concept. It is economical, social, political and cultural. The concept has to be interpreted creatively and not in a rigid and narrow way. Then it would degenerate into vulgar parochialism and primitivism. Self-sufficiency is not against global unity. In fact it is the way to it. Think globally and act locally.

Self-Reliance

Self-reliance means self-restraint with regard to one's needs so that one is always utilizing what is available to him and to his community. It is essentially a mental attitude. To-day the attitude is to increase the wants in an infinite way without any regards to the mode of satisfaction. This often leads to bankruptcy and collapse. Gandhi like realized that happiness is essentially a mental attitude and it is not to be derived from the material things. Self-sufficiency and self-reliance are the two pillars of *Swaraj* and without them any *Swaraj* will not last long.

Self - Reliance and Swadeshi

Swadeshi may be translated as self-reliance and it follows from the concept of *Swaraj*. We find that there are various interpretations of *Swadeshi*. Some interpret in narrowly as "autarky" to self-sufficiency. We may interpret it broadly as self-reliance without involving complete self-sufficiency. The question then arise how does one apply the concept of *Swadeshi* to a national context? A more meaningful question will be: How would *Swaraj* look like with or without *Swadeshi*? If *Swadeshi* is essential to *Swaraj*, then how does one go about introducing to note that bread-labour provides the ethical dimension to *swadeshi* at the level of personal action. One cannot be self-reliant. If one cannot produce the necessities of living by one's own labour. It is possible that one can obtain one's necessities from other persons. However, this is possible only under two different conditions. (1) one can become dependent upon others or (2) one can exploit others. Both are unacceptable since they involve violence, alienation and dehumanization. Hence, the importance of bread labour. Is it the time spend by one person in obtaining goods that can be later exchanged for the desired necessities themselves? The earlier concept of *Swadeshi* would favour the second interpretation.

Mahatma Gandhi explained the concept of Swadeshi as follows: 'Swadeshi is a universal law. It means first duty is to his neighbour. This does not imply hatred for the foreigners or partiality for the fellow countrymen. Our capacity for service has obvious limits; we can serve even our neighbour with some difficulty. If every one of us duly performed his her duty to his her neighbour, no one in the world, who needed assistance would be left unattended. Therefore one who serves his her neighbour, serves all the world. As a matter of fact, there is no room for distinction between one's own and other people in Swadeshi. To serve one's neighbour is to serve the world Indeed! It is the only way open to us in the service of the world. One to whom the whole world is here as his family should have the power of serving the universe without moving from his place. He can exercise his power only through service rendered to his neighbour... And whoever tries to achieve his private ends, without serving others, harms himself as well as the world at large. The reason is obvious. All living beings are parts of one another, so that a person's every act has a beneficial or harmful influence on the whole world. We cannot see this, near sighted as we are. The influence of a single act of an individual on the world may be negligible. But, that influence is there all the same and an awareness of this truth should make us realize our responsibilities.

Swaraj, Swadeshi, Self-Reliance and Satya and their Inter-relationships

When Gandhiji entered the Indian scene and the freedom struggle movement, he was able to restore to the term, Swaraj its older meaning, while retaining its newer sense and to re-interpret the term Swadeshi and considerably extend its application and above all point out the close connection between Swaraj and Swadeshi, between individual self-rule and individual self-reliance, between national self-government and national self dependence. Instead of assimilating the concept of freedom to that of community by merging the individual into an organic conception of society, he derived the very notion of communal self-reliance from his doctrine of individual self-rule and showed clearly how the pursuit of Swaraj must necessarily involve the acceptance of Swadeshi. It is very remarkable that Gandhiji achieved this result by basing swaraj upon satya i.e. linking notions of freedom and the truth by deriving the doctrine of swadeshi from his concept of Ahimsa-by laying stress on its positive rather than its negative connotation and by basing, the connection between swaraj and swadeshi upon the relationship between satya and ahimsa. In principle satya is prior to ahimsa, though conceptionally they are almost interchangeably inter twined and interwoven the former may be regarded as the end and the latter as the only legitimate means. However, in practice the immediate requirement of the pursuit of satya is the practice of ahimsa. So that the means occupy even more important place than the end at the level of moral activities and in the field of conduct. In the final analysis. Swaraj is theoretically of a higher order of importance than Swadeshi, though the two are inextricably bound up, even conceptually and yet in practice, Swadeshi has a greater immediacy and significance than Swaraj. If swaraj is the end, swadeshi is the only legitimate means. In conclusion, swaraj and swadeshi are very essential for Gandhiji in his total picture of a non-violent socialist society or Sarvodaya society and in decentralized polity incorporated in village communities and villages republics.

Incidents from the Life of Mahatma Gandhi

1) Clothing

India was not only self-sufficient in clothing but also was exporting clothes to the tune of 30 lakhs of rupees before the establishment of the British Raj. Indian clothes were of world repute. After merely forty years of British rule the export of clothes ceased. Further India began to import one fourth of British textile products. Sixty crores were spent for this import annually. The Indian handloom production was ruined. The weavers lost their occupation. Mahatma Gandhi introduced the Charka to challenge the British exploitation and to provide employment for the starving millions. He was determined to rid his country of this dependence, to stop the import of foreign cloth. To him, the practice of swadeshi - the use of things produced locally - was the foundation of Swaraj.

In the Ahmedabad Sessions Court Gandhi called himself as a "spinner, weaver and farmer" in 1922. Gandhi remarked, it is my conviction that with every thread I draw. I am spinning the destiny of India without the spinning wheel there is no salvation for the country of ours.... Every yard of khadi you wear will mean some coppers going into the pockets of the poor. Coarse hand-spun signifies simplicity of life. Khadi had a soul about it".

Some pointed out that spinning adds an *anna* (twelve paise) or two a day to a spinners income. Gandhi; "The average income is hardly three paise per head per day in India; if I can supplement that income by even three paise with the help of charkha, am I not right in calling the charkha my cow of plenty".

When Gandhi was guiding the Champaran ryots in resisting the indigo planters tyranny, a British journalist maligned him. He said that in order to win the ryots, Gandhi temporarily and specially adopted the national dress, Gandhi wrote in reply: "Having taken the vow of swadeshi my clothing is now entirely hand-woven and hand woven by me or my fellow workers". Gandhi later gave up the use of kurta and wore a loin cloth and a warp.

In South Africa Gandhi realized that washing cloths through a washerman is costly and inconvenient. He purchased a book on washing and read it carefully. Then he began to practise it and also involved his wife in that. In jail, in his old age, Gandhi sometimes washed his loin cloth, napkin and handkerchief and relieved his co-workers from doing extra work. During Kasturba's last illness in the Aga Khan Palace, Gandhi picked up hand kerchiefs used by her and washed them.

Gandhi mastered tailoring in a South African prisons as part of his punishment with hard labour. In Indian jail, for sometime he, voluntarily worked on a sewing machine. Gandhi never cared for show but detested a shabby, torn dress.

Swadeshi Spirit, The Best Way Towards World Peace

In the opinion of Dr. J.C. Kumarappa, the Swadeshi Spirit and activities based on it will lead to world peace since the primary necessities of man like food,

clothing and shelter can be secured by man by his own labour and there is no need in accumulating wealth for the purpose of satisfying artificially oriented wants and needs. If we are not able to satisfy our primary needs with our own production, we have to depend on production from other countries. It is highly dangerous to depend on foreign countries for the satisfaction of needs and when we receive economic products from other countries and thus create new problems. When we enter into international trade, the developed countries always capture the market and plunder developed countries. Therefore, the developing countries with their commerce and trade and markets have become the sources of international conflicts and tensions leading to exploitation and violence in many ways. In the words of Dr. J.C. Kumarappa, 'If we want to maintain world peace and work towards the satisfaction and happiness of the largest number, we must strive to restrict our needs or at the most we should try and produce all our necessities... International trade should be ordinarily restricted to surplus goods and luxury articles and such trade will not lead to violence and exploitation with the extension of contacts and communications and with the development of centralised industries, raw materials from the four corners of the globe are drawn and so economic wars have assumed all global dimensions. If we could restrict its spreading further and if we could bring saner methods of settlement of international disputes and conflicts, and if we could cut at the root causes of these conflicts, we have to work on the lines indicated by Gandhiji i.e. we have to restrict our needs to such articles, as can be manufactured by human labour in a locality that is within our reach and under conditions over which we can exercise control. In that way lies the hope for mankind and the way for world peace and progress".

2) Food

Gandhi was not a born kisan but he made every effort to become one. As a boy he watered the plants in his home with care. In London he discovered the importance of vegetables and fruits in human diet.

At the age of 36 Gandhi began to live a peasant's life in a South African farm. After reading John Ruskin's *Unto This Last*, he was convinced that the life of a peasant and craftsman is noble and worth living. He purchased a piece of land and started the Phoenix Settlement. Gandhi tilled the soil, drew water, grew vegetable and fruits and hewed wood. He soon converted the land into an orchard.

Mahatma Gandhiji deviated from the Indian tradition of disrespecting manual labour classifying manual workers as *sudras* and *panchamas*. Bread labour concept was dear to him. Leo Tolstoy was his source of inspiration in this.

Gandhi brushed aside and complaint about the barrenness of land, dearth of implement or meagre water supply. The major asset of a cultivator, he affirmed, was an intelligent use of his labour. He should be energetic, resourceful and self-reliant. Gandhi was for organic farming utilizing the organic wastages available in and around the farm. He wanted that the human resources which is available in plenty has to be used properly. In *Harijan*, he gave detailed instructions as how to make composed manure using the things that were near at hand without

almost any expenses - cow dung, night soil, urine, peelings of vegetables and deadly water-hyacinths. With labour and application, composed manure could be made without any capital. In ashrams night-soil and urine were conserved in pits. In a short time they were turned into rich manure.

Gandhi preferred primitive cattle plough since it ploughed deep enough for the crop but never too deep to do damage to the soil. He was aware of the fact that too many hands is the problem and so any displacement of human labour has to be discouraged. He opposed the introduction of tractor. He was for collective farming.

He said, "it is better for 100 families to cultivate together and divide the income there from than to divide the land anyhow into 100 portions."

For Gandhi, production was for consumption. He wanted to cultivate the crops which are absolutely essential. Thus commercial crops, cultivation of tobacco, etc. are anti Gandhian. He was against the middle men as well. The paddy if it is to be polished by the rich mills, then there will be plenty of room for exploitation apart from the fact that polished rice is unhealthy. Handpound rice is not only nutritious and healthy but also the peasants will be able to sell the rich (paddy) directly to the consumer. This can be extended to all crops. Agro-Industries and food processing should be left to the cottage industries. This is an important idea. Many African countries produce a lot. But they produce things for the export as a result there is increasing poverty and starvation in all these countries inspite of their increased agrarian output.

Gandhian wanted revolutionary changes in our diet system. He was for the inclusion of more and more vegetables and fruits in our diet. He was against spices and condiments. He was for very simple, but nutritious diet which involved less cooking if not no cooking. He cooked his food in London and in his Ashram there were no cooks.

Practise of Swadeshi Concept in Modern Times

Swadeshi may be considered as the philosophy of life-away of life-even in modern times. It does not merely mean boycotting the foreign goods. As Vinoba Bhave declared. "Swadeshi is an inherent duty of man. Swadeshi means self-reliance in a comprehensive sense - Swadharma or one's own duty, just as non-violence is an established rule of conduct. Things nearer to us, be it the neighbours, prevailing customs or morality, are inherited by us and therefore are dear to use not a narrow attitude; but it is related with the ideas of self-sufficiency and decentralisation. If we want to establish the village community with the principles of social justice and equality it is absolutely essential that we must develop and cultivate swadeshi spirit. In the words of Jayaprakash Narayan. "Gandhiji instilled in us the spirit of swadeshi, which was basically a sense of self-respect and self reliance. He desired us to stand on our own feet without too much dependence on others. Unfortunately we are very much lacking this swadeshi spirit in our national life today. As a result of planned economic developments the people expect the state to help them in every way and their own initiative is gradually withering

away. Although there is no harm in seeking limited foreign assistance for our economic plans, especially the technical know-how, excessive reliance on external aid would ultimately drain our energies and undermine the essential spirit of self-help".

The spirit of swadeshi has to be followed not only in the field of consumption, but also in every aspect and department of life since this spirit of swadeshi is a way of our life and must be made the guiding factor in all our activities. In the field of production, we have to develop industries which could utilise the local raw material and the aim and goal of such industries should be to meet the needs of the people who live in that area. However, in modern times, the industries produce goods only to the markets where they could get the maximum profits. In such cases, they have to sacrifice the welfare of the local people for the sake of their maximum profits. It is very remarkable and worth emulating the Swadeshi spirit so well developed by the Khadi and village industries since they fully utilise the locally available raw materials. When these industries are organised in a decentralized manner, they provide the maximum employment opportunities to the people living in that area. It is interesting to note that the Soviet Union has set a good example on the lines of swadeshi spirit by making foreign trade a state monopoly and has kept foreign traders from entering inside the local markets and therewise measures have ensured better wages and living conditions for their workers. It is very remarkable that in Japan, the people as a nation have great desire for cottage made articles. Their houses are decorated with handmade paper and the flooring is largely of rush mats and their eating vessels are generally of glazed pottery. Since in Japan there is scarcity of land, only forty five percent of people depend on agriculture and the rest occupy themselves with manufacturing goods and small units have come into existence to meet the needs of the people and so cottage industries have made great progress. Therefore, in India also, people must appreciate and follow the Swadeshi spirit and make ourselves fully self-reliant and self sufficient in our onward march towards progress. In conclusion, Swadeshi is a universal doctrine and also a dynamic concept which is relevant in modern times and is indeed a guiding principle in creating a new social order, since that concept is based on the principle of ahimsa or non-violence and is fully consistent with the laws of nature.

Gandhi was self-sufficient and in various aspects, he was a bungi doing scavenging. He was a nurse and a doctor. He nursed his wife during a delivery. His war time nursing brought him awards. He nursed the lepers.

In short, there can be no parallel to Gandhi, a leader of world repute but amazingly self-reliant. The students should collect more incidents from the life of Gandhi to elucidate the nature and extent of his self-sufficiency and self-reliance. We should draw inspirations from such incidents and act accordingly.

Swadeshi or self-reliance is an important concept in Gandhian economic prescription for the realization of his ideals. Originally defined in terms of the nationalist goal of boycotting foreign goods, Gandhiji in his usual practice of adapting important concepts for his own purposes, applied it especially for village self-sufficiency. "If the village perishes", Gandhiji declared, "India will perish too.

It will be no more India; her own mission in the world will get lost". In 1934, Gandhiji established the All India Village Industries Association to improve, alleviate and re-vitalise the bad conditions of the villagers by promoting hand-spinning and allied industries. In the villages, food and other necessities of life would be produced mainly for their own use and for the use of their neighbours. Only the surplus would be exchanged with the other villages and towns. In Gandhiji's own words. "We have to concentrate on the village being self-contained manufacturing the items mainly for use. There would be no objection to the villagers using modern machines and tools that they can make and afford to use. Only they should not be used as a means of exploitation of others".

Gandhi in His Own Words on Self-Sufficiency

"Man is not born to live in isolation but is essentially a social animal independent and inter-dependent. No one can or should ride on another's back, If we try to work out necessary conditions for such a life, we are forced to the conclusions that the unit of society should be a village or call it a manageable small group of people who would, on the ideal, be self-sufficient (In the matter of their vital requirements) as a unit and bound together in bonds of mutual co-operation and interdependence.

Mahatma Gandhi - *The Last Phase*, Vol. II (1958), p.548.

"In other words, there should be equality between the town dwellers and villagers in the standard of food and drink, clothing and other living conditions. In order to realize this equality today people should be also to produce their own necessities of life, i.e., clothing, foodstuffs, dwelling and lighting and water".

Mahatma Gandhi - *The Last Phase*, Vol. II (1958), p.547.

"Truth and non-violence form the foundation of the order of my conception. Our first duty is that we should not be a burden on society, i.e., we should be self-dependent. From this point of view, self-sufficiency itself is a kind of service. *After becoming* self-sufficient, we shall use our spare time for the service of others. If all become self-sufficient, none will be in trouble. In such a state of affairs, there would be no need of serving anybody. But we have not yet reached that stage and therefore we have to think of social service. Even if we succeed in realizing self-sufficiency completely man being a social being we will have to accept service in some form or other. That is, man is as much self-dependent as he is inter-dependent. When dependence becomes necessary in order to keep society in good order, it is no longer dependence but becomes co-operation. There is sweetness in co-operation there is no one weak or strong among those who co-operate. Each is equal to the other. There is the feeling of helplessness in dependency. Members of a family are as much self-dependent. There is no feeling of either mine or thine. They are all co-operators. So also when we take a society, a nation or the whole of mankind as a family all men become co-operators. If we can conceive a picture of such co-operation we shall find that there would be no need of support from the lifeless machine. Instead of making the greatest use of machinery we shall be able to do with the least use therefore and therein lies the real security and self-protection of society".

The Ideology of the Charka (1951), pp.86-88.

"My idea of self-sufficiency is that villages must be self-sufficient in regard to food, cloth and other basic necessities. But when this can be overdone. Therefore you must grasp my idea properly... Self-sufficiency does not mean narrowness. To be self-sufficient is not to be altogether self contained. In no circumstances we would be able to produce all the things we need. So though our aim is complete self-sufficiency, we shall have to get from outside the village what we cannot produce in the village; we shall have to produce more of what we can in order thereby to obtain in exchange what we are unable to produce".

Khadi Why & How (1915), pp.86-88.

"As for food, India has plenty of fertile land, there is enough water and no dearth of man power... The Public should be educated to become self-reliant. Once they know that they have to stand on their own legs, it would electrify the atmosphere".

Harijan, 19-10-47, p.379.

"Self-sufficiency is a big word... Villages will be swept away if they are not self-sufficient as to their primary wants and self-reliant and to their protection against internal disruption by dissensions and disease and external danger from thieves and dacoits, self-sufficiency, therefore, means all the cotton processes and growing of seasonal food crops and fodder for cattle. Unless this is done; there will be starvation. And self-reliance means corporate organization ensuring adjustment of internal differences through arbitration by the wise men of villages and cleanliness by corporate attention to sanitation and common disease. No mere individual effort is going to surface. And above all, villagers must be taught to feel their own strength by combined effort to make their villages proof against thieves and dacoits. This is best done by corporate non-violence. But if the way to non-violence does not seem clear to workers, they will not hesitate to organize corporate defence through violence".

Harijan, 5-4-42, p.107.

Every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs even to the extent of defending itself against the whole world".
Harijan, 28-7-46, p.236.

APPENDIX

THIS WAS BAPU

A Dream of Death

"I do not know if the sacrifice of Mr. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi has gone in vain. His spirit always inspired me. I envy his sacrifice. Is it not shocking that this country has not produced another Ganesh Shankar? None after him came to fill the gap. Ganesh Shankar's Ahimsa was perfect Ahimsa. My Ahimsa will also be perfect if I could die similarly peacefully with axe blows on my head. I have always been dreaming of such a death, and I wish to treasure this dream. How noble that death will be, - a dagger attack on me from one side; and axe blow

from; another; a lathi would be administered from yet another direction and kicks and abuses form all sides and if in the midst of these I could rise to the occasion and remain non-violent and peaceful; and could ask others to act and behave likewise, and finally I could die with cheer on my face and smile on my lips, then and then alone my Ahimsa will be perfect and true. I am; hankering after such an opportunity and also wish Congressmen to remain; in; search of such an opportunity".

Message sent by Mahatma Gandhi on the occasion of the celebration of the anniversary of the martyrdom of Shri Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, who was killed in the Hindu-Muslim riot at Kanpur in 1931.

1

THE SALT OF LIFE

"Do you think a sense of humour is necessary in life?" Was a question put to Gandhiji by a visitor and his reply was: "If I had no sense of humour, I should long ago have committed suicide".

A Parting Gift

A British journalist met the Mahatma shortly before he died. "Have you anything for me, Mr. Gandhi? he asked. "Not unless you want my shawl", was the reply.

The Lion and the Lamb

Gandhiji was asked by *The Times of India* representative at Nagpur: "What will become of the British, if your Swarajya is established within a year?" He replied: "The lion will lie down with the lamb".

His Religion

While he was engaged with Mahatmaji, a young American missionary asked him what religion he professed and what shape the future religion of India was likely to assume.

His reply was very brief. Pointing to the two sick persons in the room, he said, "To serve is my religion. I do not worry about the future".

When G.B.S. Visited Gandhiji

George Bernard Shaw, in describing his visit to Gandhiji during the latter's stay in London towards the close of 1931, stated: "When I visited Gandhi I noticed he was sitting uncomfortably on a huge upholstered chair. I seized the situation at once. I said: "Won't you sit on the floor as you do at home? I sat likewise and instantly we became friends".

A Birthday Message

Gandhiji sent the following reply to the organizers of the World Fellowship of Faiths who had requested him to send them a 'message' on the occasion of his birthday (2nd October, 1933).

"What message can I send through the pen, if I am not sending any through the life I am living?"

7

Drink Evil

"Why are you so uncharitable to those who drink?" asked an English student of Gandhiji when the latter was staying in London towards the close of 1931.

"Because I am charitable to those who suffer from the effects of the curse," Gandhiji replied.

The Birthday Purse

"Supposing I don't's present you the purse but walk away with, what will you do?" asked Shrimati Sarojini Naidu, with her eyes on the fat purse which had been collected to be presented to Gandhiji on his Birthday on 2nd October, 1941.

Gandhiji : "I know you are capable of doing that!" (Laughter)

Secret of Success

"Success attends where truth reigns", was the cryptic message sent by Mahatma on the inauguration by Shri B.G. Kher, Premier of Bombay, on the 7th October, 1947, of Gandhigram, an institution devoted to constructive work on lines laid down by Gandhiji, at the foot of Sirumali Hills, some 30 miles north of Madurai.

Is the World Getting Better?

"Is the world getting better or worse?" asked an interviewer.

"So long as I believe in benevolent God", replied Gandhiji, "I must believe that the world is getting better even though I see evidence to the contrary".

"What of You?"

While Gandhiji was in Yeravda Jail in 1923, Kasturba with some members of the Ashram interviewed him. Gandhiji amongst other things asked about Jamnalalji and Vinoba, and he was told that they had gone to jail. He was exceedingly delighted with the news, but wondered why Kasturba herself was still free.

"They do not arrest me. What can I do?" said Kasturba.

The Black Cat

An amusing story was told by Mr. Lloyd George about Gandhiji's visit to his house at Churt in 1931. Just as Gandhiji settled in his couch in the house, a black cat they never before had seen, came through the window and rested in Gandhiji's lap. When he left, the cat disappeared too and did not come back again. The same cat returned when Miss Slade (Mirabehn) visited Mr. Lloyd George at Churt.

Birthday Message to Tagore

On his eightieth birthday Gurudeva Rabindranath Tagore received the following message from Mahatma Gandhi :

"Four score not enough. May you finish five, love".

Gurudeva's reply was as follows:

"Thanks message but four score is impertinence, five score intolerable".

Mahatma and the Capitalist

A big financier, a captain of business, put this question to Gandhiji once: "Do you want me or my money to the Nation's cause?"

"You", was the straight reply.

"What task would you assign me if I left off business and joined you?"

"The spinning Wheel", replied Gandhiji as he plied the Charkha.

"Wild Man of God"

During his stay in London in connection with the Second Round Table Conference in 1931 Lady Astor invited Gandhiji to a luncheon party given by her. As he sat in shawl and loin cloth at her table, Lady Astor, always vivacious, characterized her distinguished guest as a "wild man of God". The reference amused him to laughter and he retorted. "And you are wild woman of God!".

Good-bye to Tea!

"Gandhiji enjoyed his afternoon cup of tea-until one day I gave him a shock by asking him solemnly, though partly in jest, whether he could not do without regularly drugging himself. "What do you mean?" he inquired a little anxiously. 'Well', I replied, 'isn't tea either a stimulant or a narcotic?' After a moment's reflection he said gravely : 'So it is.' And from that day tea was taboo".

- Mr. H.S.L. Polak in *Vegetarian News*.

In Buckingham Palace

"The climax of Gandhiji's freedom convention in the matter of dress was reached when I saw him mounting the carpeted stairs of Buckingham Palace to greet the King and Queen, with his blanket round his shoulders, at the royal Party in honour of the Round Table Conference delegates and other visitors. I do not think the Palace had seen a visitor in that costume before, nor is it easy to conceive that anyone else would have been allowed the same freedom". - Sir Abdul Quadir.

Life Insurance

"Here you insured your life?" asked an Agra friend of Gandhiji.

This was Gandhiji's reply: "I did insure my life in 1901 and a short time after I gave up the policy because I felt that I was distrusting God and making my relatives, in whose behalf the policy was taken, dependent upon me or the money I might leave them rather upon God or themselves. The opinion arrived at when I gave up the policy has been confirmed by subsequent experience".

A Cabinman's Ruse

During Gandhiji's journey from Bombay to Delhi in April 1946 when his special train arrived near Gangapur station on the Western railway line, a young Muslim cabinman on duty there had the train stopped by not giving signal for the train to pass. The cabinman then rushed towards Gandhiji's compartment for his Darshan. Addressing Gandhiji this young man said, "Since all these years I was eagerly waiting for your Darshan. My desire has been fulfilled today. Please keep us in your mind in your mission at Delhi".

The Power of Prayer

When, during Mahatmaji's 21 days' fast undertaken in September 1924 for bringing about Hindu-Muslim unity, the doctor, noticing the extreme weakness of Gandhiji at the end of twelve days of the fast, spoke to the later about the perishing of the body, Gandhiji, with a smile gleaming in his eyes like sunshine, answered simply, "You have forgotten the power of prayer".

The power of prayer did, indeed, prevail, for Gandhiji survived the ordeal, as the world knows.

"Ask Ba"

"Do you ever suffer from nerves?" asked Mrs. Eustace Miles of Gandhiji when he was in London in connection with the Round Table Conference in 1931.

"Ask Mrs. Gandhi", straight came the reply, leaving her to admiring his humour still more, "she will tell you that I am on my best behaviour with the world but not with her".

"Well". said Mrs. Miles, "my husband is on his best behaviour with me".

"Then", retorted Gandhiji, "I am sure that Mr. Miles has bribed you heavily".

His Sense of Humour

"One of the things that delighted many English people was the discovery that the great Mahatma had the same sense of humour and laughter at the same things as ourselves. I had the honour of driving him a little way in my car. On the way he asked me about my honorary degree. "What is this 'D.D.' that you have?" he said. in explained that it was the degree of a Doctor of Divinity, bestowed on me (*honoris cause*) by Glasgow University. "ah", said he, "so you know all about divinity?" - Miss Maude Royden.

"The Light of the World"

An adult young man asked Gandhiji when the question of uplifting the 'untouchables' was being discussed, "well, Sir, why did you not force your way into the temple at Cape Comorin, when they did not admit you? It was an insult you should not have put with. You, Sir, are the light of the world and who were they to exclude you?" "Yes", said Gandhiji laughing, "either I was not the light of the world and they were justified in keeping me out; or I am the light of the world and I should not have forced my way into it".

Violence Preferred to Cowardice

Gandhiji always made it clear that his creed of non-violence was of the brave. But where the choice was between cowardice and violence, he was definite that he would prefer violence to cowardice. "Thus, when my eldest son asked me what he should have done, had he been present when I was almost fatally assaulted in 1908, whether he should have run away and seen me killed or whether he should have used his physical force which he could and wanted to use and defended me, I told him that it was his duty to defend me even by suing violence", wrote Gandhiji in *Young India*.

A Laugh at Himself

During his visit to Santhiniketan in December 1940, Gandhiji was shown one of the photographs where in he was sitting with Rabindranath in front of the room in which the world-famous *Gitanjali* was written.

When Gandhiji was seeing this photograph, someone remarked, "Bapuji, when this photograph was taken you were eating something". Gandhiji took the photograph in his hands, saw it for some time and gave a hearty laughter and remarked: "Whether it is Gurudev or anybody, my eating goes on".

"Not an F.T.S."

Asked whether he had ever been a member of the Theosophical Society, Gandhiji is reported to have stated that he had never been a member, but he was and had ever been in sympathy with its message of Universal Brotherhood and consequent toleration.

He added : "I owe much to the Theosophical friends among whom I have many. Whatever critics may say against Madame Blavatsky, or Col. Olocott of Dr. Besant, their contribution to humanity will always rank high. What has been a bar to my joining the society is its secret side-its occultism. It has never appealed to me".

His Daily Bill of Fare

During the interview he gave to the Editor of *The Spectator* of London, who visited him in India in 1934, Gandhiji stated:

"This is my daily bill of fare : for my breakfast at eight o'clock I have eighteen ounces of goat's milk and four oranges; for my luncheon at 1 o'clock I again have sixteen ounces of milk, grapes, pears or other fruit. My evening meal is between 5 and 6 o'clock. I eat a teaspoonful of almond paste, twenty or thirty dates, several tomatoes and a lettuce or other salad. This avoids indigestion. As you will note, I eat no starch and no cereals".

"Price of Freedom is Death"

"The price of freedom is death" - this almost prophetic observation was contained in one of the letters written by Gandhiji not long before his death to Dr. Gope Gurbux of Bikaner. Dr. and Mrs. Gope Gurbux were inmates of Gandhiji's Ashram at Sevagram for a fairly long time and Gandhiji had been personally instructing and guiding them in spinning, latrine cleaning, cooking, etc. When leaving the Ashram they had received the following parting message from him : "Follow whatever commands itself to you in yours life".

"Bande Mataram"

During his stay in Calcutta in August 1947 in one of his post-prayer speeches Gandhiji referred to Bande Mataram which was sung just before prayer by a lady. As the song started, the vast gathering stood up and reverently kept standing.

Mahatma Gandhi was alone seated because, as he remarked later, he had learnt that their culture did not require standing as a mark of respect when any national song or Bhajan was sung. It was an unnecessary importation from the West, he thought. After all, it was the mental attitude that mattered, not the superficial appearance.

Like the True Yogi

During his Konkan tour Gandhiji happened to reach the village of Lange at midnight. The villagers had been anxiously awaiting his arrival for hours. In his address to them Gandhiji said, "I do not know whether I should pity you or myself for keeping you waiting until this hour. But we have done what the Yogi of the Gita does: 'The night of sleep of the ordinary mortals is a day of wakefulness for the Yogi.' I congratulate you on your Yoga, but you will better deserve my congratulations if you show that you are true Yogis by contributing for the poor and by purchasing our Khadi". There was pleasant laughter at these witty remarks of Gandhiji.

A Report Courteous

During his visit to the Sabarmati Ashram in January 1930 the Poet Rabindranath Tagore remarked to Gandhiji: "I am seventy now, Mahatmaji, and so am considerably older than you".

"But", said Gandhiji, with a hearty smile, "When an old man of 60 cannot dance a young poet of 70 can dance".

"That is true", said the Poet, and added: "You are getting ready for another arrest cure. I wish they give me one".

"But", said Gandhiji, "you don't behave yourself...", and there was a peal of laughter among the inmates of the Ashram who were listening to the repartees of these two greatest sons of India.

"Welcome" of "Unwelcome"?

Gandhiji's sense of humour asserted itself unexpectedly on many an occasion. During his tour of the Central Provinces in November 1933 at Lanji, presents made to him were inscribed with the word 'Shubha-gamana' ('Aurevoir') instead of 'Shubha-agamana' ('welcome'), referring to which Gandhiji said, "Since you want me to depart I will be very soon at Betul".

The Municipal President read the address and was about to walk away with it when Gandhiji said, "You cannot take it away. It is to be given to me". His remark caused a good deal of laughter in the audience.

Postman Before Premier

According to Mr. S. Winsten, author of *Days with Bernard Shaw*, who had become acquainted with Gandhiji during the latter's visit to London in 1931, once Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, the then British Premier, arrived for an urgent consultation with Gandhiji, but a postman had walked all the way from Bow to Knights bridge because he wanted to pay his respects to the great Indian leader. "I'll see the man of letters first", said Gandhiji decisively and then he explained to Mr. Winsten : "You see, a statesman can wait, for that is his job; he is always waiting till circumstances force him to remove".

A Race in Paternity

At Kingsley Hall, where Gandhiji stayed during his visit to London in 1931, many came to hunt for his autograph. One such admirer of Gandhiji was an ex-Navy man whose credentials present to Gandhiji included his having served Mirabehen's father for a number of years and that his son-in-law was supplying milk to Gandhiji.

"How many children have you?" Gandhiji asked him.

"Eight, Sir, four sons and four daughters".

"I have four sons," said Gandhiji, "so I can race with you half-way." And the whole house roared with laughter.

The Secret of His Power

What was the secret of Gandhiji's power? He himself answered once:

"The Secret?

A clear hear,

A clear conscience,

A cool head,

Regular communion with God,

Abstention from carnal food and pleasure,

No alcohol, smoking and condiments,

A strict vegetarian diet,

And love for all my fellow-men".

Man and the Machine

The Bishop of Birmingham, who met Gandhiji during the latter's visit to Birmingham in 1931, was loud in his praise for science and machinery, which he said, were made to free man from manual toil so that he might have all his time or the bulk of it for intellectual work.

Gandhiji reminded the Bishop that he could not trust the average man to use all his spare time profitably on the strength of the old adage "Satan always finds some work for idle hands to do". But the Bishop demurred.

"Look here", he, "I do not do manual work for more than an hour a day. The rest of my time I give to intellectual pursuits."

"I know", said Gandhiji laughing, "but if all became Bishops, the Bishops would find their occupation gone".

A Missionary's Zeal

Addressing a gathering of Christian missionaries at Y.W.C.A. at Calcutta on 28th July 1925, Gandhiji recounted his association with Christians both in London and South Africa. He said:

"There was even a time in my life when a very sincere and intimate friend of mine, a great and good Quaker, had designs on me (Laughter). He thought I was too good not to be a Christian. I was sorry to have disappointed him. One missionary friend of mine in South Africa still writes to me and asks me : 'How is it with you?' I have always told this friend that so far as I know it is all well with me."

Origin of 'Gandhi Cap'

Mr. H.S.L. Polak, who was closely associated with Gandhiji in his South African campaign, explained some years ago the "origin" of the "Gandhi Cap" in a letter in *The Manchester Guardian*. He wrote:

"There are surprisingly few people, even among Indian Nationalists, who recall the origin of the so called 'Gandhi Cap'. It formed part of the uniform which Mr. Gandhi, as a non-White political prisoner, wore during the South African Indian passive resistance struggle of 1907 to 1914. He later used it when, on his return to India, he further developed his technique of non-violent Civil Disobedience".

GANDHI ANECDOTES SHRIMAN NARAIN AGARWAL

I

WHEN I first met Gandhiji in April 1936, at Maganvadi (Wardha), I felt greatly disillusioned - disillusioned not because I was disappointed, but because I found Gandhiji very much different from what I had expected him to be. I, like so many others, was under the impression that the Mahatma must be full of reserve and unchanging seriousness. But to my great surprise, within a few minutes of my first personal acquaintance, I found him to be eminently human, with an ever-flowing fountain of sparking wit and cheering humour.

"What work will you like to do for me here?" asked Gandhiji.

"I am at your service, Bapuji. Please give me orders!"

"I know that you have recently returned from England and can do good literary work; but I will not give you that work. Do you know the science of the charkha? Here is my charkha which is out of order. Can you set it right?"

"I am afraid I do not know anything about the charkha. I shall have to learn its technique first!"

"Has all your education not been a waste, then? As the Hindustani idiom expresses it, your education has amounted to 'sieving out sands' (*Khak Chhinana*)", remarked Gandhiji with a hearty laugh.

"I agree, Bapuji", I smiled out.

"All right, then. I will give you the same work, in a very real sense. Good sand has to be sieved out for the trench latrines here. Why not assist St. M.S. in that work?"

"I will do the job with pleasure," was my prompt reply. "I have done a lot of gardening, and the work will, therefore not be new to me".

"O.K.", smiled Gandhiji. And I did do the job on each Sunday for some months.

II

It must have been the month of March in 1937. Gandhiji was on his way to Madras for the session of the All India Hindi sahitya Sammelan over which the late Seth Jamnalal Bajaj was to preside. Gandhiji always draws enormous crowds at every station. At that time the question whether the Congress would accept office in the Provinces was agitating minds of the people in the country. The Grand Trunk Express by which Gandhiji was travelling reached Bezwada in the morning. There was great rush at the station for the Mahatma's *darshan*. One press correspondent somehow managed to shove his way through the surging crowd, and, perspiring, asked Gandhiji abruptly: "Bapuji, will the Congress accept office?"

It is evident that any remark from Gandhiji on that important question would have found wide publicity. Even his silence would have been interpreted significantly by the press. But Gandhiji is very clever at dodging press correspondents.

"Why, do you want to be a Minister?" was Gandhiji's prompt enquiry, with a chuckle of genial humour.

The whole crowd laughed, and the poor correspondent had no other option but to quietly and quickly recede into the background.

III

Gandhiji was kind enough to stay at my cottage at Wardha twice last year. When he came first in December, 1944, he used three pillows at night. Next time in February, 1945, I found that he had completely discarded the use of pillows.

"Bapuji, why don't you use pillows now?" I enquired with some hesitation.

"I had once read that *Shavasana* Induces sound sleep. So I am experimenting with that pose", replied Gandhiji.

"Bapuji, your life has been full of experiments. In old age, you should now experiment on others as well. Your health is too delicate and precious for such experiments".

"Oh no! My life itself is an experiment. My experiments will end only with my death", smiled out Gandhiji.

IV

When Gandhiji was to go on the Bengal tour last year, two third class compartments were reserved for him and his party. He found that two compartments were not necessary; his party could be easily accommodated only in one of them. So he called Kanu Gandhi and asked him to vacate one of the two compartments.

"But both have been reserved for us, Bapuji. The railway authorities have been already paid!"

"That does not matter at all! We are going to Bengal for the service of the poor and starving millions. It does not behave us to enjoy comforts on the train. Moreover, don't you observe the suffocating rush in other third class compartments? Under such circumstances, we should not occupy more space than what is absolutely necessary. Travelling 'third' with so much reserved accommodation these days will be a criminal joke!" observed Gandhiji.

No further arguments were necessary. The whole party moved out of one compartment, vacating it for other passengers.

And then alone could Gandhiji relax himself into sound sleep.

Wardha,
1-6-1946.

The Great Experimenter

Bharatan Kumarappa

The first time I had anything to do with Gandhiji was in 1929 when I was in London as a student, and my brother, J.C. Kumarappa, was at the Gujarat, Vidyapith, Ahmedabad, working within reach of Gandhiji who lived then at Sabarmati, a mile or two away. My brother had been converted to Khadi, but I could see no sense in hand-spinning. I believed that to make our country prosperous we should adopt efficient methods of production such as Britain, America, Germany, Japan and Russia had done, and certainly not the outmoded spinning wheel. I therefore wrote angry letters to my brother saying that Gandhiji

was doing harm to India by reviving hand-spinning, which would only keep the country poor. My brother showed my letter to Gandhiji. Gandhiji's message to me was characteristic. He said that he would be glad to see me on my return, that as soon as I came back; I should start work along my own lines to make India prosperous, and that if I succeeded, he would be my first disciple. This, I am sure, he did not say in defiance, but in all sincerity as an experimenter with Truth; for through my long contact with him since, I know that Gandhiji's is the experimental mind which says: "This method of mine whether theoretically correct or not works, and I will stick to it till I can find one which works better". He is essentially a man of action, who is not misled by theorizing. He wants to be shown results before he will accept any nice-sounding idea. Besides, it is a way of his with people who come to him with beautiful plans, to get them to put their schemes into operation themselves; for it is after all they who understand their scheme best, and may be expected to have sufficient enthusiasm for it to overcome initial obstacles. Moreover, only by working out a scheme can one get to know all its implications in full. It may be thought, however, that since almost every mail brings Gandhiji long letters from people who tell him what they think he should do or not do for this or that purpose, he has, probably out of sheer surfeit of such advice, adopted the easy course of saying: "I go my way. If you think yours is so wonderful, you go yours. Why bother me?" But to think this of him is to do him injustice, for I know that he studies schemes submitted to him very carefully if he thinks there is something in them. Further, not satisfied with his own judgment, he considers experts in the field, and obtains their opinion before he takes a decision on it. No short cuts for a man of his standing. If he avoided difficulties, he could not have become what he is today.

To my cost, I saw a great deal of the experimental mind of Gandhiji when I stayed with him at Maganvadi, Wardha. I was new to him then. So he made me sit by him during meals. He was experimenting with various articles as diet. One was fresh neem leaves made into a paste. It was as bitter as quinine. Daily he swallowed large quantities of it himself and served me with some. I had to put on a nice face over it, and eat without flinching all that was placed in my plate. Then there was soya beans. Everyone sang its praise at that time in India. Gandhiji got some grown in Manganvadi, and we were all served with it at every meal. It was cooked, mashed and eaten without further ado. My trouble was that besides eating my share of it, I had to eat what Gandhiji thought was too much for him and graciously passed on to me. Then we used to have 'salad', i.e. any non-poisonous fresh green leaves he found growing about the place. These you dipped in salt and ate. We grew plenty of oranges in Maganvadi. He got a brain wave that he would make wealth out of waste, and produce *murabba* (marmalade) out of their skins which are usually thrown away. So we were feasted with orange-skin marmalade! In the South, tamarind is much in vogue for seasoning food and making *rasam* (peper water). Gandhiji heard of the high nutritive and medicinal value of tamarind, and as nobody around him knew how to use it, he made a sherbet (sweet drink) out of it with *gur*. This was a success, and we enjoyed it. But when it came next time without *gur* and with only salt, we made way faces. It was called *rasum* and we who were from the South justly felt insulted that so famed a preparation of ours as *rasam* was caricatured thus. It was the colour of mud and tasted much like what it looked! The next time

some groundnut was put into it to make it less forbidding. Another experiment was with oil-cake. We were extracting oil in Maganvadi with the bullock-driven oil-press. Oil cake was said to have valuable nutritive properties. So Gandhiji thought, why not see if 'tasty' dishes could be made out of it for human consumption? We were, therefore, served oil-cake 'chutney' made with *dahi* (curd). Garlic is reputed to have antiseptic qualities when eaten raw. Gandhiji tried large quantities himself, and gave it to whoever would eat it. The result was soon everybody round him stank of garlic. Lately it was reported in the papers that ordinary grass had plenty of vitamins and made a perfect food for human beings. Fortunately, however, the discovery was not made when Gandhiji was still with us in Maganvadi, for then he might have decided to wind up the kitchen and ask us to graze on the lawn! All of us used to be weighted regularly every two weeks, and our weights reported to him. I expect his interest was to see how we fared on his experimental diet.

He depended on diet as his chief remedy for disease. Disease gave him a vast field for experiment. He delighted treating patients. He would listen very carefully to all their complaints, enquire in detail about their diet, and prescribe to the last ounce what they should eat or drink, and when. Reports had to come to him regarding each patient before the next food was prescribed, and often he saw himself that every item of the food was in order and in the right proportion before he allowed the tray to be taken in. His interest in his patients was so great that he would visit them morning and evening, and would hate to be separated from them even by important political work with the Viceroy. He would rush back to their bedsides as though they were infants to be nursed by no one but him.

An experimental mind is always open and ready to make a change when necessary. Whether, Gandhiji agreed with you or not, he always listened intently and reflectively when you criticized him or made a suggestion to him to change his procedure. This did not mean of course that he did whatever people told him. When he was convinced of the rightness of his course, he was as firm as rock. But otherwise he gave in. I may record a trivial incident to show how open he is to suggestion. He generally leans on a girl as he walks, and with his other hand he holds his stick. There were two or three ashram girls who had got into the habit of escorting him by turns wherever he went. It noticed that same girls did this service for him even on his tours. I thought this was unfair to local girls who were seeing him possibly for the first time in their lives and would regard it as a never-to-be-forgotten privilege to escort Gandhiji. I suggested this to him, and immediately he dismissed the ashram girls by his side for another. And ever since, I have noticed that he gives preference to girls of the locality for escort. He is never too proud to take a suggestion, from howsoever humble a quarter, provided he approves of it.

There are occasions when Gandhiji yields even when he is unconvinced. I remember the case of a student whom he sent to us in Maganvadi for a short period of training in paper-making. I demanded the usual fee laid down by the "All India Village Industries Association". Gandhiji did not think the fee should be charged in this case. But I explained why the fee was being charged; and

though he seemed to think that it was unnecessary and too high, he gave in finally and sent the student with the fee demanded. His principle in such cases was evidently not to go against the decision of a worker entrusted with the management of an institution. He was the unofficial President of our Association, its founder and adviser, and he could have insisted on my carrying out his wishes. But he was too constitutional for that. He believed that, if a man was in charge, he should have full responsibility and should not be interfered with in day-to-day administration unless it was absolutely necessary. By this method it would seem that Gandhiji allowed himself to be defeated. But no, he really triumphed. By submitting to my decision he made me even more conscious of my responsibility in looking after the interest of the Association without fear or favour. He lost a few rupees in the way of fees, but he won the esteem and loyalty of a worker, which was much more important. It indicated to me the truth of his contention that non-violence of the strong knows no defeat. It is always victorious.

Another supreme case of Gandhiji's non-violence in relation to me was when he wanted me for a particular type of work. I said that I would consider the proposition. Soon, however, I decided against it and told him so. He did not like my decision. But he did not try to persuade me to change it. He said that he would like me to help, but if I felt that I would be happier doing something else, he would certainly not stand in my way. I should feel perfectly free to follow my own inclinations and in just the manner I pleased. These were practically his words. He gave me free reins, but this only bound me closer to him. Again the triumph of non-violence which ruled by refusing to rule.

If there was anything to be done, there was for Gandhiji no waiting for an opportune time. It had to be done immediately. He advised village workers to take to scavenging in order to keep the village clean. They said that, if they did scavenging, they lost all status and influence with the people of the village, so that they could not do any other work there. But Gandhiji would not listen. He said, First things first. Where there was dirt, it had to be removed and at once. There was no such thing as waiting for a later time to remove dirt. Following his own advice, he carried a bucket and shovel when he went for a walk from Maganvadi every morning, or those accompanying him carried them for him, and with his own hand he would shovel into the bucket any dirt or human excreta lying on the roadside, and bring to home to be converted into manure.

Believing as he does, like our seers of old, in simplifying life, Gandhiji reduces his wants to a minimum. I walked in once into his room when he was getting ready for a shave. He did not have any soap or brush but only a crude country razor. No foreign razors for him. I asked him how he could shave without soap. He said that soap was quite unnecessary, water served the purpose when rubbed into the face. I thought this was carrying things a little too far, and that you could not really have a proper shave without soap. But later when I was in jail and ran out of shaving soap, and there was difficulty in getting it from outside, I remembered this incident, and tried shaving without soap or brush. Friends told me that it could not be done, that it made the face burn, that it dulled the razor's edge, and so on. But I found that none of these things was true, and from that day to this I continue to shave without soap or brush. In fact I prefer water to soap, for it is not messy like leather, and shaving is therefore less disagreeable.

Modern civilization is based on artificially increasing man's needs in order to make for trade and business. We ought, therefore, to check up occasionally to see if all we are told we need is really so. We shall probably find that much of it is useless encumbrance and unnecessary lumber.

Travelling with Gandhiji is a remarkable experience. I accompanied him on his tour in Bengal, Assam and Madras in the cold weather of 1945-'46. Everywhere the enthusiasm of the people for him was unbounded. In some cases it was beyond control, and people stopped the train and demanded his *darshan* (a view of him) even at all hours of the night before they would let the train pass. The night that we were travelling from Wardha to Calcutta, he was so tired with the noise and the shouting throughout the day that he sat in his seat exhausted with his fingers in his ears. It was a pathetic sight. He went to bed at 9.30 p.m. with cotton wool stuffed in his ears to prevent himself from hearing. Our worst experience was as we travelled through Bengal to Assam. The mobs stopped the train repeatedly by pulling the alarm chain. They flashed torches on Gandhiji's face to have a look at him, and banged the windows of his compartment to make him get up and give them *darshan*. We were entirely at their mercy. Because of being held up by crowds thus, the Mail took thirteen and a half hours to cover a distance usually made in six and a half hours. After this bad experience, the government of Bengal would not allow him to travel by ordinary trains. Gandhiji protested in vain, saying that as a public worker he did not want any special facilities. He believed that public money should not be used for providing comforts to people who were journeying at public cost. The Government, however, was adamant; if ultimately he yielded and permitted a Special to be provided for him, it was because he was told that the Railway could not afford to have ordinary trains detained for several hours on the way, and that such delay caused other passengers and the Railway great inconvenience. So thereafter we had to travel by special trains.

During the journey, whenever the train stopped at stations, he collected money for the Harijan Fund. People often underwent torture to get through the crowd to place money in his hand. They pushed their way through, and in the process got crushed, or tore their clothes, or lost their chapels. Still they persisted till they could reach his out-stretched hand. It often happened that just as someone was at the point of placing money in his hand and Gandhiji was bending his utmost to take the gift, holding on the window sill to prevent himself from falling out, the crowd would push and the gift receded. He would laugh like a child heartily enjoying the fun, and taking up the challenge he would stretch his hand out all the more till he secured the money with evident glee. At one station in Andhra, I noticed a woman holding in her hand a pair of gold bangles and trying hard to get to him. She struggled for well over five minutes although she was within a few feet of where he stood. At times she was pushed towards him, at times away from him. She could make little progress and seemed in great distress. In the meantime Gandhiji went off to the other side of the compartment to give *darshan* to the throngs who demanded his presence there. The woman, however, continued to struggle to get to within reach of his window, thinking that he might still come back to it. On seeing this, I spoke to him about her and brought him back. But just as she was pushing through desperately, the train whistled and started off. She made one last frantic effort, but was mercilessly pushed back by the police.

And there she stood on the platform, disconsolate and weeping, with the gold bangles still in her hand. For most of us, to give is no pleasure; to this woman as to thousands of poor people, not to give to Gandhiji what was often their sole possession was untold deprivation.

Many, young and old, rich and poor, stood in his presence as before a god in reverence, and put their hands together as in worship. In Bengal we sailed in a boat through canals; people lined the banks all the way or ran along them, or sometimes stood knee-deep or even waist-deep in water, in spite of the cold, to catch a glimpse of Gandhiji and to give him reverential greeting. We were told that many of them came from distant villages, sometimes walking two or three days, carrying their babies, sleeping under trees on the way and undergoing great hardship, all for the *darshan* of Gandhiji which they regarded as somehow propitious and purifying. It is usual today to consider religion and religious reverence, which are said to be a special characteristic of our country, as something to be ashamed of and to be outgrown. When I saw people's faces lit up with religious devotion at the sight of one who stood for renunciation of material goods, service and devotion to spiritual ends, I thought that, if this was peculiar to us, it was a thing to be proud of; for culture does not lie in love of wealth, power and display which after all attract men only superficially and temporarily, but in appreciation of spiritual values which alone finally command the respect of all. The devotion of the crowds all along to this "naked fakir" seemed to be a sign of our hoary culture which had taught our people, even the humblest, to turn away from the cheap showy things of life and to regard with adoration things unseen but lasting and eternal.

Enthusiasm and devotion Gandhiji met with in plenty in all the places he visited. In Madura, it was thought that no less than 300,000 people assembled for the open air prayer he conducted. But what he felt was greatly needed by us as a people was discipline and organized action. Everywhere he spoke of it and introduced, as a first step towards it, keeping time during mass singing by clapping the hand in unison. It was a remarkable sight to see thousands acting thus as one organised whole. It was akin to military drill. The difference was that it was directed by Gandhiji to the non-violent purpose of chanting the name of God. When one witnessed it, one felt that here was the next crucial step towards which Gandhiji unknown to himself was pointing, viz, to organize and wield the nation into a united whole. This is the task to which he is now devoting himself, especially in the way of bringing about understanding and unity between Hindus and Muslims. Gandhiji's prophetic soul is once more giving the lead. It is up to the nation to follow if it is to enjoy the freedom, now within its reach. Nay more. This oneness he is today striving for is not only for us in India but also for Asia and for the whole war-worn world. His aim is that by establishing unity and concord between the various communities within her borders, India should win the rest of the world to ways of love and peace. He is, therefore, not prompted by any narrow patriotism. Nationalism in his case has for its basis true internationalism or genuine desire to help to establish peace on earth and goodwill among men.

Bombay,

8-4-1947.

Exercise

1. How Gandhi combined material life and spiritual life.
2. Discuss the clash between need and greed.
3. Explain human and life-centred Peace Economics of Gandhi.
4. How Gandhi led a self-reliant life in various dimensions.
5. Discuss the trusteeship mentality of Gandhi with examples.
6. How Gandhi led a simple life.

Application / Field work

1. Discuss your level of consumerism. How will you reduce it within a time frame?
2. How will you improve your present level of self-reliance?
3. Suggest concrete ways to improve your own simplicity.
4. How to live a need based and not greed based life?
5. How you will distinguish between basic needs and wants (greed) with examples.
6. Explain the benefits of simple life with examples from your own personal life or observation.

Lessons - 13, 14 & 15

ECO LIFE STYLE - TO BE IN TRUE WITH NATURE ECO FRIENDLY BEHAVIOUR

Mahatma Gandhi is well rooted in Indian and eastern Civilization and heritage. The Indian Civilization has Shramana (Jain, Buddhist, etc.,) Vedic, Dravidian and traditional indigenous folk cultural elements and to this other world influences have been added from time to time.

Jainsim and Buddhism brought out the unity of all forms of life apart from the unity of humankind. They also called for creative relationship with all the other including so called "non-living" natural systems like land, water, air, etc. For them, they are all living entities. This is very much in tune with the conemporary revolutionary insights into "New Science".

Advaita Vedanta gave a new theistic content to the vision of the unity of all forms of life and matter. Reverence for life and matter and self-restraint are the essence of these approaches.

But in the west, dominance, exploitation, conquest, subjugation of matter, living beings and human beings by other human beings have been the basic facts of life. This trend has all along been nourished and enriched by religion, philosophy, science and technology, etc., This has resulted in environmental destruction in an unprecedented scale, fuelled further by greed, selfishness and supported by modern science and technology.

The environment problem has taken a terrible shape threatening the very existence of humanity. Only now, the eyes of some people have opened. Now we dimly realize the need for living in harmony with fellow human beings, other life systems and matter. Isolation from them and over use and abuse of them may lead to very dangerous consequences. The possible environmental holocaust looms large. We need to check this effectively and well in time.

Mahatma Gandhi was far ahead of his times. He is a timely prophet warning humanity about our wrong direction and called for radical shifts in our vision, plan, strategy and behaviour. He himself became a classical model for this in all its divergent aspects.

Mahatma Gandhi's vision of Eco Philosophy includes the following.

- 1) Welfare of all at all levels.
- 2) Holistic development at all levels.
- 3) Welfare and development of the last first.

- 4) Paying more and special attention to the weaker and disadvantaged ones.
- 5) Love, compassion, reverence, mutual aid, cooperation, altruism, truth, morality, service, fraternity, justice, equality, contentment, swaraj, ... in the place of egoism, greed, selfishness, exploitation, competition, domination, imperialism, falsehood, injustice, immorality, arrogance and pride, violence, ...
- 6) Nonkilling ethics.
- 7) Limiting wants, self-reliance, simplicity, voluntary poverty, brahmacharya (self-restraint), control of the palate, bread labour, ...
- 8) Ethical values-clean money, nonpossession and trusteeship-truth and nonviolence-means and ends-alternative life style at all levels.

All these were well reflected in all aspect of Gandhi's action, word, thought, motivation, etc.,

The western approach to environmental issues is to discover more and efficient technology to control environmental degradation. For Example instead of the existing car, discovering more fuel efficient and less polluting car. But here we look at the environmental issue only in a narrow way. The new car may cause less environmental damage. But we do not here take into account the damage caused by making yet another new car and what will happen to the old car. The west tries to find answer by more production and by more spending.

But the Gandhian approach is quite different. It questions the very basic assumptions of Western approach. Consumerism, endless multiplication of wants, unlimited production of goods, etc., This does not mean giving up all science and technology but give up all wasteful, destructive, unnecessary, unethical and eco-hatred technology. Mahatma Gandhi wanted to give a human and spiritual face for science and technology. He challenged the demonic aspects of science and technology.

In India, eco-friendly behaviour needs to be given top priority to sanitation and hygiene. These have been rather ignored for long and the resultant colonial dehumanization made things worse. Gandhi wanted to see things carefully and deeply and wanted us to discover the "truth". Thus Khadi is not only to challenge the British exploitation, but to provide employment to the starving and unemployed and underemployed people and it is also eco-friendly and non-exploitative. Many of today's multinational products are exploitative, eco-destructive, harmful and unnecessary wasteful things. They also spoil the health and well-being. e.g., Pepsi, Coca Cola and other soft drinks tobacco products, liquors, etc.,

Gandhian vision of swadeshi takes into consideration the contextual factors. The idea of bio-regionalism is very much valid. Consuming things produced from far away places demands increased transport and so more pollution. If a thing is absolutely necessary that can be brought from any place. Things brought from far away places may not suit to the local conditions as well.

Gandhian vision of naturopathy with natural and proper diet, productive manual labour, ethical living, holistic development, good relationship good habit and practices, simple healing techniques, responsible parenthood, yoga, meditation, prayer and sanitation and hygiene etc., seems to be aviable alternative to the high tech medical care system which is highly expensive and has serious side effects. May be very few people really need western system of medicine in such a situation.

Here we present Acharya mahapragya's Ecological Thought in Jain Philosophy. This significant passage comes closer to the Gandhian vision, except in a very few place. So it is presented here.

THE PRIMACY OF RIGHT KNOWLEDGE

The primary element of good conduct is non-violence. 'Do not torment anybody! Do not oppress anyone! Do not kill' But right knowledge precedes non-violence. Without right knowledge of the soul and the non-soul, all talk of non-violence seems premature. 'Do not kill man or animal!' This is plain enough. But our world does not consist of only men and animals; it consists of living beings. How many living beings are there? One must come to know that first. In the whole of the philosophical world, it is Lord Mahavir who has propounded this subject with the utmost subtlety.

The six-fold classification of living organism (*shadjivanikaya*) is a rare subject; it may be called even transcendental. It is not available in any other philosophy. Man, animal and small living creatures like the insects-these have been analysed by metaphysicians, and some of these metaphysicians have also explored the vegetable kingdom and looked upon it as an animate world. It may be they did so after Mahavir. But the *shadjivanikaya* has not been recognized in any other philosophical system.

Acharya Siddhsen has written: "O Illustrious One! The doctrine of the *shadjivanikaya* alone would suffice to establish your omniscience. No other proof is required".

Without omniscience, the doctrine of the *shadjivanikaya* cannot be propounded. Other philosophers have recognized five elements: the earth, the water, the fire, the air, and the ether. Lord Mahavir does not recognize them all. He leaves out the ether. He recognizes the other four as living organisms earth-bodied souls, water-bodied souls, fire-bodied souls, air-bodied souls. The fifth are vegetation-bodied souls and the sixth is the mobile-bodied soul.

There are six signs of the zodiac and six orders under which all the souls are subsumed. Among these, five orders of immobile souls are micro-organisms; we cannot see them with our eyes. The mobile organism are gross; they are visible to the eyes. Lord Mahavir has depicted the existence of the micro organism in touching words:

I say-Let not a person reject the existence of the world nor reject the existence of his soul.

He who rejects the existence of the world, rejects the existence of his soul. He who rejects the existence of his soul, rejects the existence of the world.

The acceptance of one's own existence implies the acceptance of the existence of the world; it is the acceptance of the existence of other living beings. The rejection of the world implies the rejection of the existence of subtle living beings; it is the rejection of one's own existence.

Western scholars say-"This is the knowledge of the primitive ages. It is not in recognizing these as elements. It is not that these contain souls, but they themselves are souls. This is Mahavir's original contribution. The water contains souls, and the water in itself is a soul; the earth contains souls, and the earth in itself is a soul.

Two words occur in the Jain Agamas-'earth-bodies' and 'earth-dependent'. These words have been used in respect of all living organisms. To regard them all as souls is an absolute proof of Mahavir's transcendental knowledge. It is phenomenal that souls abide in all directions. It may be asked, "Where is the soul to be found?" It may be answered that the world is full of souls. There is not an atom of a person's body, which does not contain subtle souls. Someone asked, "How many kinds of living organisms abide in this finger?" It was said, "The finger itself is a soul, but it also contains within itself countless living organisms, including earth-bodied souls, water-bodied souls, fire-bodied souls, air-bodied souls and plants". It was said, "There may be innumerable souls in space covered by the point of a needle. In respect of *nigod* souls (a kind of species of micro organisms), a verse is often quoted:

In the needle - pint space of a *nigod*, exist countless linear divisions;
In each linear division, exist countless spherical divisions;
In each spherical division, exist countless bodies,

In each body, are there to be found an infinite number of souls!

The whole world is full of souls. Until a man comes to realize this truth, until he grows conversant with the laws governing subtle souls, he cannot fully apprehend the principle of non-violence. That is why it has been said "He who does not know the soul or the non-soul, how can he appreciate self restraint or non-violence?"

Firstly, one must know what a soul is and what a non-soul is. Only then, he would easily apprehend non-violence.

Another point that arises is that the subtle organisms are very sensitive. Do these organisms experience pleasure and pain? The subtle organisms are extremely small. In a clod of earth there exist countless beings. There may be an infinite number of souls in a tiny fragment of a plant. Their consciousness,

too, is not manifest. Are such souls sensible of pleasure and pain? This question was also deliberated upon in the context of non-violence. People found it difficult to appreciate that the subtle being could feel pleasure or pain. Lord Mahavir said, "It is true that the consciousness of these subtle souls is not manifest, and they are one sensed beings, possessed only of the sense of touch, still they are certainly sensible of pleasure and pain. They possess no mind like other souls, but they have non-sensory knowledge.

Non-sensory knowledge which means collective consciousness. It is remarkable how modern science came to recognize the concept of the collective mind in the vegetable kingdom. We can hardly imagine how the souls of the plants apprehend what goes on around them. In this context, two scientists, Dr. Vogel and Dr. Baxter conducted a number of experiments. Vogel discovered that man and plant could exchange their feelings. Baxter conducted an experiment in which he joined the sensitive wire of a polygraph to the tissue of a plant. There-upon, the plant started communicating its feeling; the index of the galvanometer started vibrating. Dr. Baxter understood that the plant was 'thirsty'. He sprinkled water on the plant. Again, the needle of the galvanometer moved; the plant was expressing its gratification! The scientist wanted to continue the dialogue with the plant. With a view to provoking the plant, he plucked a leaf and put it in his coffee, without any noticeable reaction on the part of the plant. Then he thought of burning the leaf. The moment he thought of it, the pint of the galvanometer again began to throb. Baxter was much surprised. He felt certain that the plant apprehended everything.

After conducting thousands of experiments, scientists have arrived at the conclusion that the plants apprehend our thoughts. Some amazing experiments have been performed by the scientists. The Soviet Communist party had declared plants as members of their party! Changes in outlook are also visible in other communist countries. When with the development of para-psychology, the experiments on the vegetable kingdom came to light and subtle truths were discovered, old beliefs gave way. There arose a note of protest, "Stop these experiments or the foundations of communism would be shaken!" We continue in the gross world of the senses as long as we believe in the concepts of Charvak. We are least inquisitive, have little consideration of others, are out for enjoyment; we do what we please. We think that is the whole purpose of living. But when we come to know the subtle truths, our ideas undergo a change and our sphere of existence broadens. The whole life of an individual is transformed. He begins to think: "There are other people in this world, too. I am not alone. Therefore, I must exercise self-restraint"

The important question is : Why did this doctrine of self restraint pertaining to animate as well as inanimate beings arise? It is in fact nothing but the science of environment. Exercise restraint in the interest of living beings! Protection of all souls was a natural corollary of the discovery of subtle truths. Today we have many sophisticated instruments, like the lie-detector, the polygraph, etc., which were not available in the old days. One could then discover the subtle truth only through extra-sensory perception.

Lord Mahavir said "Observe for yourself? There is unmanifested consciousness in plants!" The consciousness there is not manifest. But then how do they experience pleasure and pain? This was brought home to the people through concrete examples. Lord Mahavir said, "A man is blind, deaf and mute. To be deprived of the organs of sight and hearing, to be bereft of the eye and the ear, is tantamount to the ending of relationship with the world. It is upon seeing and hearing something that we respond to it. We use the tongue to express our feelings. The man who is blind, deaf and mute, the one who cannot see, not hear nor speak-if some one torments such a person, does it not cause pain to the latter?".

"O Noble One! It certainly causes much anguish to the handicapped person!"

"How do you know of it?"

"Oh Illustrious One! Such a person does experience pain, though he cannot express it".

Lord Mahavir said, "Similarly, if micro-souls are hurt, the latter would feel the pain, but since they have neither eyes nor ears, nor tongue, they have no means of manifesting their pain. The vital current of life force of the universe which is inherent in every living being.

The scientists have coined a name for this vital current-the cosmic ray-the life force of the universe which is inherent in every living being.

"View every living creature as you view your own soul!". The day one realizes the truth thereof, it becomes impossible for him to indulge in violence any more. Not to speak of plants and trees, today man is killing man. Mahavir presented another example of a man who has fallen unconscious. The question arises, does he feel any pain in unconscious state? He may not be conscious of it, but his inmost consciousness certainly feels it. There is a vital power in man which apprehends pain even when he is unconscious. It is on this basis that Mahavir pronounced: "Just as an unconscious person experience pain, but he cannot express it, similarly a micro-soul is sensible of pain, though it cannot manifest it.

It is through such examples that the sensibility of micro-organisms has been brought out in the Acharang Sutra. Modern scientific experiments have made this fact all the more manifest. A detailed analysis of the sensibility of pain and pleasure clearly establishes that sensory consciousness and extrasensory consciousness to exist in the world of micro-organisms.

In the historical perspective, the human world and the vegetable kingdom have both coexisted since the beginning of time. At first man lived among the trees in the forest. Nowadays, most people prefer to live in cities. In the cities are to be found big bungalows, surrounded by little gardens. We may ask why there should be a garden in front of a bungalow. It seems that man abandoned the forest to settle in the villages and cities, but because he did not feel at home there, he sought to recreate an atmosphere of the jungle in the city.

Actually, man cannot live without trees. Let him who wants to create poetry, sit under a tree, and the imagination will start working at once. Take a pen and some paper and sit under a tree and start writing and a story will evolve of itself. The sight of a flourishing tree with leaves and flowers moves even a very brusque person and imparts to him a touch amiability.

Plants constitute the principal basis of our vital energy. Shut up a person in a dark, closed room and he will feel suffocated. When a man goes out for a morning stroll in the garden, he experiences a sense of physical, mental and emotional well-being. Yet, despite his long and very intimate relationship with the vegetable world, man, yet, continues to be indifferent towards it. A kind of ruthlessness inhabits his heart, for he is strangely lacking in compassion, tenderness, sympathy and a sense of kinship with the vegetable world from which he derives so many benefits. Ironically, he shows no love for his benefactors towards those who are his life-long friends and upon whom his very existence is dependent.

Lord Mahavir propounded the doctrine of treating others as oneself.

Mahavir has detailed many similarities between man and the vegetable kingdom which modern science has now corroborated.

Similarities Between Man and the Vegetable Kingdom

Man is born.	Vegetation, too, is born.
Man grows.	Vegetation, too, grows.
Man is sentient.	Vegetation, too, is sentient.
When bruised, man feels pained.	Vegetation, too, feels pained.
Man takes food.	Vegetation, too, received nourishment.
Man is mortal.	Vegetation, too, is mortal.
Man blooms and dies. away.	Vegetation, too, blossoms and withers
Man accedes to different states.	Vegetation, too, accedes to various states.

Lord Mahavir said, "Treat all other souls as yourself!". In the context of vegetation, he expounded the same doctrine;

"Observe for yourself! Plants and trees are nearer to you than other living beings. It may be somewhat difficult for you to identify yourself with earth-bodied, water-bodied, fire-bodied and air-bodied souls, but far easier to identify yourself with the vegetable kingdom. Try to understand plants and trees; reflect upon their plight and afford them full protection and freedom from fear".

"Do you realize that you are inspiring dread in souls which give you life! Stop vexing them! It is true that you are dependent upon them for your basic needs. You cannot live without food. But at least do not torment these souls unnecessarily. Nourish this sentiment in your heart that the vegetable kingdom is your benefactor. Ask forgiveness for the rough treatment you meter out to it. To satisfy your needs, you are obliged to cut off some branch of a tree, or to eat some vegetable. At least beg forgiveness for it. Let this feeling awaken in your

mind, 'Because of my need, I cannot help exploiting the vegetable kingdom. I beg pardon of the plants'. This would be a proper expression of gratefulness".

The quintessence of what Mahavir said is that we should cherish for the vegetable world feelings of compassion, cooperation, good-will, gratefulness and we should seek forgiveness of it for exploiting it. Many people who cut down trees, fall ill. They do not even know wherefrom their illness comes. Once a mystic of Japan Dr. Hiroshi Mokoyama examined a patient but could find no clue to his disease. Mokoyama asked him, "Is your mother-in-law dead?"

"Yes!"

"Is there an old tree in front of your house?"

"Yes!"

"Well, that is the cause of your disease. Some people want to cut down that tree. A pure soul lives in that tree. And your illness is a warning from that sources".

The physician's diagnosis proved to be true. After some days there come a hurricane which swept away that tree. The man planted a new tree in its stead. From that moment, his illness began to mend and in a few days he got all right.

The trees become the dwellings of some expired souls. At the time of accepting initiation from a guru, a Jain householder takes the vow- "I will not cut down a big tree". This is very important vow.

Let us grasp the truth that the greater is the number of trees cutdown, the more insecure human life becomes. The cutting down of a tree means violence and destruction of one's own colleague. Violence is of course perpetrated when we cut down a tree, but this also poses a danger to human life. The existence of man and the preservation of trees are inextricably connected with each other. Today, man is ignoring this truth. Dominated by greed, he is ruthlessly perpetrating criminal injustice upon the vegetable kingdom and this, in itself, has become a problem for him.

Lord Mahavir has distinguished two kinds of violence avoidable and necessary. This is quite scientific. Both these words are linked with man's conduct in life. Some violence is implicit in the very act of living: one cannot avoid it. But man can certainly stop indulging in unnecessary violence. He can certainly exercise control over spurious needs. It is important to make a distinction between basic needs and pseudo-needs created by desire. In naturopathy, two kinds of hunger are recognized - natural hunger and artificial hunger. Natural hunger occurs naturally and is easily satisfied. But perpetual hunger caused by some disease is unnatural and unappeasable. One sufferings from it may devour a tremendous amount of food, but his hunger is never satisfied. It is endless and everlasting, thereby posing a grave problems for the individual and society.

Once upon a time a few children were playing on the bank of a pond. They threw a few pieces of stone into the pond. It agitated the water causing ripples in it. The children were delighted to see it and they started throwing more and more pieces of stone repeatedly. A western scholar was watching the show. He saw the children's pranks as well as the agony of waters. The latter touched his heart and expressed his anguish in the form of a poem, which said that while the children felt ecstatic by causing ripples in the water, the water itself underwent intense agony in converting itself into ripples.

No one capable of being sensitive to the water's agony can ever indulge in its waste.

TRESPASSING LORD MAHAVIR'S DIRECTIONS

A garden is a natural means of giving health and entertainment to man. He is simply delighted to see the garden in blossom. But if for his own pleasure he pulls a twig or plucks a flower, it causes unspeakable pain to the plant. Plants are so sensitive that they start shivering the moment someone enters the garden unannounced, with a view to trimming and cutting them. They read the mind and come to know the intention of the newcomer. One cannot be said to be doing justice to vegetation if one exploits it beyond one's needs, unmindful of the pain caused to it in the process.

Lord Mahavir said, "He trespasses my directions who is careless about vegetation and who abuses it". By keeping the above dictum in mind men can practise caution towards conscious beings and can exercise control on themselves in making use of them. It is essential to avoid senseless violence. People often quote the saying, (one conscious being survives by consuming another) but often forget another, (conscious being help one another) If each conscious being is full of sympathy and helpfulness towards another, no conscious being can damage the interests of another. Even if one cannot help the inevitable violence associated with birth, one should at least strongly resolve to avoid senseless violence. Those devoid of the above resolution practise unimaginable cruelty against other conscious beings.

Man does need food and shelter, but he can certainly do without indulging in luxury. Do people using flower decoration at the time of marriages and other festivities ever think how their individual satisfaction involves the killing of innumerable conscious beings. In this luxury at all essential for eking out their existence. If millions can lead a normal life without the above luxury, why should some people rain destruction on tongueless conscious beings? People's life style can undergo transformation if they avoid such senseless violence even to a limited extent.

Right now a campaign for elimination of rats is going on. But hundreds of new problems will arise if they are eliminated. Extermination of any organic species leads to innumerable problems.

Flies are not useless; they are of immense use to human beings. So is the case with mosquitoes. They do sting, but also render great service to the people. All harmful small creatures are also useful great service to the people. It is thought that rats consume large quantities of cereals and thus do a lot of harm, but they do a lot of good too. If rats perish, cats will perish too, besides many species acting as insecticides. Nature acts on the synergistic and symbolic principles. Every particle is united with another particle. A single thread is by itself ineffectual, but when thousands of strands unite, fine fabrics are produced which serve countless purposes-wrapping, bag making, rope making etc. A single strand could not have done much in isolation, but many strands together can yield innumerable benefits.

This entire world is an integrated whole. It is only through integration that life is sustained and the world is functional. Any trace of disintegration results in great damage and disruption. A single act of disintegration disturbs the entire functioning of Nature.

It has to be remembered that one does not become happy merely by desiring happiness. Also, happiness cannot be earned by oppressing or inflicting pain on others. It follows that one should not practise indifference towards even the tiniest creatures. It is equally essential to have a liberal attitude towards cereals, vegetables, fruits, flowers, grass and leaves (conscious being in the vegetative world), because vegetable kingdom is very useful to human beings.

Cutting vegetation is polluting the environment. The only way of saving man from the innumerable dangers caused by environmental pollution is restraint. The Ramayan written by Keshraj has the following tow lines:

"Two words of sympathy uttered by someone at the time of distress give such happiness as if nectar has been poured on a burning part of the body."

Restraint too is a kind of nectar. Increasing use of consumer goods fans the fire of ever-growing desires. There is only one way of extinguishing it-restraint. Practising restraint affords happiness, frees man from material temptations, gives a feeling of contentment and rids man of the cycle of desires and doubts.

Everyone is aware of the increasing difficulties in the world. But no one understands why they are increasing. The Jain tirthankars (founders of religious doctrines) have held non restraint as the source of all problems. Modern man wants to solve problems through the development of science. But it is like gulping mouthfuls of sand in order to quench hunger. It is the boat of restraint that can ferry men across the sea of worldly woes. People will have to subscribe to the ideal of treating life and restraint as synonyms and will have to limit individual consumption.

Lord Mahavira's enunciation of five immobile souls is highly significant. One should be in harmony with the world of immobile souls. The existence of other beings and the vegetable kingdom is not different from that of ours. Our awareness will be progressively heightened as we imbibe the above truth more and more.

Self-aware conduct is dependent on harmony with all beings, not only with sentient beings but also with the world of matter. Physical Matter is what is possessed of touch, taste, odour and colour. It is so called because it has a property of synthetic composition and analytic decomposition. Senseless bidding with non-living objects is also a kind of non-restraint. As there is non-restraint related to souls, there is also nonrestraint related to non-souls. The essence of Lord Mahavira's maxim-pertaining to awareness, which he exemplified by his conduct and life lies in the acceptance of the existence of others.

"I am not the only person living in this world; there are others, too" This is the fundamental principle of the science of environment. Every living being moves around and breathes, wearing the armour of his particular environment extending in all directions. In his vicinity exist many souls and non souls and their environment. Lord Mahavir said, "The earth, the water, the fire, the air, the vegetation - souls bide in all these whose existence should both be denied. For the denial of their existence is the denial of one's own entity. Only he who repudiates his own individuality, can deny the individuality of other souls. Whether they are immobile or mobile, whether visible or invisible-only he who acknowledges the existence of other souls can do justice to the environment."

One may not even deny the existence of the unconscious world. Every conscious entity existing in this world has around it the covering of the unconscious. One soul influences another, it also influences a non-soul. Likewise, a non-soul influences a soul. These currents of influence are transmissible. So no one can be said to stand alone. The man who sits alone in a Himalayan cavern, carries with him the whole world.

Only he who acknowledges the existence, the presence, the functioning and the utility of others can establish harmony between the individual and society.

Non-violence is a principle of harmony, of synthesis. The science of environment and non-violence are indivisible. This science is the product of the present century, whereas the doctrine of non-violence is very old. Lord Mahavir surveyed non-violence from various aspects. One of these aspects corresponds with the present day science of environment.

Not only did Mahavir provide a basis for the science of environment, but he also suggested a way to implement its programmes. "Do not kill those souls you can do without killing in the course of living. Do not torment them! Even those souls whose consumption is unavoidable in the course of living, must not be subjected to unnecessary violence. Avoid all waste!" A reconsideration of today's environmental problems is called for in the light of the above prescriptions. Today, the earth is being exploited to the maximum extent. This has seriously disturbed the environmental balance. The source of energy are fast diminishing; also the mineral resources. The modern scientists are engaged in discovering new sources of energy. At the same time, they are much concerned about the depletion of available resources. Water is being misused. It is feared that a day might come when sufficient potable water would not be available. Some regions of the world are suffering today from the consequences of the ruthless cutting down of trees

and forests. The destruction of the trees has been acknowledged to be the greatest cause of the scarcity of rain.

Demand and supply, desire and its gratification-a comfort-seeking and opportunistic point of view has encouraged violence and it has at the same time upset the environment balance. Whereas the doctrine of non-violence is a doctrine of self-purification, it is at the same time a doctrine of purity in environment. Material goods are limited, the consumers preponderate and their desires are endless. the doctrine of non-violence is the doctrine of restraining desire, of weeding out unwholesome desires. Whatever desire comes to the fore should not be yielded to in the form it appears, it must be refined by discrimination. Today's scientists and industrialists want to provide man more and still more amenities. They evolve new products and create in the people's mind a demand for them. On the one hand, we have the comfort-seeking mentality, on the other hand, there is a mad rush for the creation of still greater amenities. The essential needs of life have become secondary, but the means of comfort and cosmetics have become primary. Under these conditions, violence has increased and the environmental balance has been spoilt.

Now we present extracts from Pravin N.Sheth's "*Theory and Praxis of Environmentalism; Green plus Gandhi.*"

1) Major Works as Catalyst

The biosphere of our inheritance, and the technosphere of (our) creation are on a collision course. They show how science and economic growth both improve or the undermine life on the planet Earth. Rachel Carson's book, *Silent Spring* (1962) was a breakthrough in methodical study which broadened the base of environmental movement, and pressured the authorities for banning the D.D.T. In *Gaia : A New Look at Life on Earth* J.E. Lovelock showed that what keeps our planet a suitable place for life are interactions between living organic and inorganic matters. E.F. Schumacher in his *Small is Beautiful* emphasized on the need of community self sufficiency and the virtues of manageable, appropriate and decentralize technology.

In their *For The Common Good* the Maverick scholars Daly and Cobb envisage a "new economics". The much touted market (of this age of liberalisation) is impressive at production, and but not for allocation of social justice, promoting participatory democracy or sustainable development, and it must be kept in its place.

Mere Reisher predicted water wars across groups and states (farmers, cities, states) particularly in arid areas of the American West. But that well could apply to some states in Africa and South Asia. Sandra Postel in her *Last Oasis* (World Watch Institute), a study of water resources, water problems and the approach to its management also underlines the same in graphic details.

The Global 2000 Report by Richard Barney and colleagues is the most far-reaching attempt, as yet, by the U.S. Government in this field. The grim report

concludes that the world of 2000 would be more crowded, more polluted, and less stable ecologically and more vulnerable to disruption than it was in 1980.

Our Common Future (1981) by the World Commission on Environment and Development outlines what government must do to restore environmental health to this planet especially in the poor countries. Even the report's critics agree that it weaves an impressive number of politically realistic proposals into a coherent plan for sustainable development. It also argued for relating environment with development and showed the dependence of economic growth on the wise use of natural resources. Though its synergetic view on environment development relationship is contested by the environmentalists it has gained currency in the developing countries and in the North.

The *World Resources*, 1992-93 is a compendium of essays on recent environmental topics, assessments of environmental trends and conditions ranging from energy consumption to availability of contraceptives. However, recording its objective of using this well informed and dependable book by the U.S. President to "beat some sense" into Washington advisors, "nothing of the sort happened".

Since 1983 every year the World Watch Institute publishes its *State of the World report* in which Lester Brown, Sandra Postel and their colleagues track environmental trends and problems and widely point out the policy mistakes that will deprive the mankind and the Earth of achieving a sustainable future. **Environmental Almanac** published every year by World Resources institute (Washington) gives useful environmental data, continent-and countrywise.

In *Our Country, the Planet* (1992) Sridhar Ramphal stressed that our environmental future and human prospects depended upon how much our policy makers and individuals will be influenced by notions of sustainability, how the critical divide between the rich of the North and the poor of the South will be addressed and what patterns of global governance the nature develops. Albert Gore (the Farmer U.S. Vice President) in his *Earth in The Balance* (1992) envisages environmental politics which reconciles economic and political realities with a need for planetary rescue operation. For this he pleads for a 'strategic environmental initiative' and a global Marshall plan. A far cry from the SDI of 1980s and Marshall plan of the Cold War era, his influential position as the U.S. Vice president should morally put him under pressure to translate some of his important prescriptions into the policy package for the world's super state. Through their *Ecology and the Politics of Scarcity Revisited* (1992 updated) William Ophuls and A. Stephen Boyan have analysed the stresses on the ecosystem and found that the ecological scarcity inevitably is the function of population growth and overconsumption of natural resource by the rich that threaten liberal democracy. They caution:

"With the line of demarcation blurred in this context, the state will have to be hard in preserving the natural resources and ration its uses. Individual liberty will have to be restricted in order to guard the common good unless dramatic changes take place well in time to pre-empt the full strike of scarcities".

It is a persuasive critique of the current crisis of government, particularly the West. In their *Limits to Growth* (1972) using then sophisticated computer modelling techniques Donella Meadows and 30 researchers tried to plot how such trends as fast growing population, increased pollution, agricultural development and growing energy and mineral use will lead to economic and social collapse. Though proved wrong in its prognosis about an imminent disaster, it forced people to recognize the possibility of natural limits.

John Young in his *Sustaining Earth: The Story of the Environmental Movement* (1991) dwelled on environment politics of the three advanced continents. He also explained what separates the Third World from the First World environmentalism as we know.

"It is about to die and a new post-environmentalism will rise like Phoenix from its ashes" he observed. The Rio Earth Summit in 1992 reinforced his main point that environmental goals can no longer be pursued apart from social justice, cultural diversity, communitarian values and respect for life in all forms. It converges with the critique of dominant model of development and alternative environmental view as reflected in the Green and Gandhian thought. Along with ideas flourished vigorous eco-movements.

(2) Environs-Movements

i) Four Waves of Modern Environmentalism

In USA modern environmental movement passed through four different, though not entirely unrelated, waves.¹ The first wave is in the beginning of the 20th Century, when modern environmentalism marked the era of the land and wild life conservation. Started on the first Earth Day, 1970 the second wave of modern environmentalism heralded a vigorous movement of environmental awareness and activism which helped produce some landmarks in pollution control legislation. The third wave in the 1980's gave fillup to public interest groups and organized environmental lobby as illustrated by Fred Knopp's Environment Defence Fund and Jay Hair's National Wildlife Forum. It adopted market-based initiatives as a form of lobbying for lieu of regulation to induce industry to produce less pollutant wares and through pollution immunising processes.

Meanwhile debate was raised whether it was enough to control pollution by encouraging, say, auto industries to lower carbon dioxide emissions or to press for *preventive* action such as replacing private cars by public transport. Was it all focusing on pollution control or minimisation or force the relocation of polluting industries to poor and politically less empowered areas of the country such as in some southern states and ghettos in the metropolitan areas of USA? The blue collar environmentalists organizations as public interest corporation. It was ironic that big corporations causing pollution like Dupont, Chevron and Waste Management Corporation became the largest donors to the Environment Defence Fund - EDF, National Wildlife Forum and the World Wildlife Forum. Some of

1. Mark Dowie : "The New Face of Environmentalism", *Utne Reader*, July-August 1992.

these funding corporations even managed to obtain right to attend enviro-seminars. Some like the EDF skilfully utilized the public opinion generated by grass roots Organizations like Lois Gibbs Love Canal which inspired children to protest against the use of bio-nondegradabale substance styrofoam to contain the popular products of MacDonalds, the fastfood chain. The EDF which entered in negotiation with the MacDonalds in 1990 struck a soft deal with this fast food chain which discontinued the use of styrofoam. But the EDF did not mention the catalytic role of Lois Gibb and her Love Canal, the symbol of aggressive consumer activism. Three lessons from this public interest management groups were learnt by other environmentalists.

First, they should not rely on political structures and corporate or management approach to environmentalism. Second, they should concentrate on preventing, rather than controlling, say the use or content of lead in the gasoline and the paints. Third and more importantly, they should initiate basic orientation of the capitalist social systems. The pollution causing corporations gave 90 of their environmental contributions to G-10, the first 10 major environmentalist organizations like the EDF, NEF, Wilderness society, Audobon Society, Sierra Club, friends of the Earth, WWF and the World Resources Institute. Vast, ideologically diverse interests of these organizations and their funding rarely tapped the energy of their grassroots supporters. It was only at the grassroots level that direct confrontation with the powerful polluters could take place.

No doubt, the Third Wave Environmentalism led by G-10 have succeeded in placing environment near the top of the national political agenda. Millions of acres are added to the wilderness system as a result of their efforts. National parks have come up and are being preserved. Dead lakes are living again. Lead content in the gasoline and other products is either contained or eliminated. Strotium-90, the fatal toxin from the cow's milk and children's bones has disappeared. The Environmental Protection Agency at federal and state levels in the United States is constituted for monitoring projects and industries. And it has made its present felt in the field of environmental impact assessment and its protection.

But such environmentalism also encouraged its antibody, the industrial lobby of anti-environmentalism. They are busy bringing out their own publication and planting their man in the major press like *New York Times*, etc. Which counter the idea and activities of the modern environmentalists. More importantly, the third wave environmentalists looked almost like any other special interest groups and not a public interest group "with a larger, social cause". The G-10 were largely elitist in composition, character and style. Environmentalism and pollution were seen as a technological phenomenon rather than a public concern and a political challenge. Seen in terms of a good science and resource management, basic issues of mass public transport, organic farming, logging and renewable energy, etc. were hardly addressed to.

Such an experience gave rise to the fourth wave of modern environmentalism. This wave branched out into two streams.

i) The Radical Environmentalism as forcefully advocated by the Earth First! Movement¹ and

ii) The grassroots movement. Thousands of grassroots movements aimed at local water management, prevention of pollution causing structures and processes, local waste disposal and management, struggle against manufacture or use of toxic or environment-hostile products, etc. have sprung up since mid-1980s. They are particularly noticed in the low-income blue-collar neighbourhoods that suffer from the highest concentration of toxic wastes and pollution. Women, poor and people of colour are forces of this fourth wave of modern environmentalism. Mobilisation is the major programme in their movement.

ii) The Green Movement : Thought and Dynamics

The Green movement is the culmination of a series of social/scientific/philosophical movements in the modern times. The stage was set by one scientific movement which articulated an ethical direction. It was the movement toward natural conservation² whose eloquent spokesmen were Henry David Thoreau and John Muir. They advocated preservation of wilderness and wild life for their redemptive and moral value. Later on Sierra Club was formed along this line. Still later on during 1960s, as environmental movement became vigorous, it pitted industrial interests against conservationist and libertarian social activists. It broadly forked out into two major factions.

One group argues that environmental agenda can be realized by operating "within the system". The democratic institutions of the West are broad and flexible enough to accomplish the goals of environmental protection and social justice. This group includes the Sierra Club, EDF, the Wilderness Society, the Audubon Society and Friends of the Earth. With management approach it is profusely staffed and operates by resort to court and the Congress through litigation and lobbying. They put emphasis on public education and environmental law to accomplish social goals. 'Reformist' in nature, it is more dominant in USA.

The other faction is the Greens who are far more prominent in democratic Europe than in the USA. The Green movement questions the very system, which, they say, is at the root of environmental and social degradation. Therefore meaningful change can be brought about through fundamental transformation of our society, and our attitudes to man-nature relationship.

The Green movement includes basic insights of the modern environmental movement but moves tactically beyond them. It emphasizes on 'new economics' which recognizes that human life and economic activity are interdependent part of the wider ecological process that sustain life on earth.

1. Brown Taylor : "The Religion and Politics of Earth First!" in *The Ecologist Asia*, September/October 1993.

2. *A History of Nature Conservation in Britain* (London, 1992).

' The Green movement is iconoclastic against the accepted tenets of economic and sociological thought of the West. As Petra Kelly, the foremost Green Leader of Europe stated, they no longer relied on the established party. They demand "a radical rethink of fundamental issues facing society on the part of the established parties". The Green movement had a global moral scope, said Kelly.

"It must be explained how all people on earth are to live as affluently as we are, or why a world containing 1.5 billion very rich people and 4.5 billion very poor people from whom the rich draw most of their resources is morally tolerable and/or not likely to self-destruction in vicious international conflict".

The mankind extracts and use our finite resources as if they are limitless. We make only weak efforts to control population growth, even when we have a finite mass of land on which people will have to live and from which to feed them. "We pour our waste pollution into the land and sea as though they could absorb it for ever", so they point out that the mankind is living 'unsustainably'. Only viable society is a 'sustainable' society. A sustainable society would find ways of minimising the extraction of resources and the production and consumption of goods rather than maximizing them as being done at present. The Greens, therefore, question the very foundation of politics and economics of growth in a more fundamental way than single - issue environmentalism focusing on conservation of Nature.

Beginning with environmental problems, they do not *end* with them. They go much beyond. In the place of the current politics and economics of growth, pursued virtually by every society on the planet, the Greens argue for their version of sustainability.

Splitting the atom was to bring cheap and virtually unlimited energy; instead it has brought the world to the race for armament and a more unequal world of nuclear haves and have-nots, and Chernobyl and the likes, and possible accidents, terrorist acts, misuse by governments, etc., "Biotechnology assured food for all, but our television screens annually remained filled with bloated bellies and dark staring eyes". The United Nations envisaged peace for the planet, but there have been more war deaths around the world since 1945 than during the whole period of the second world war. And more deaths and health hazards since 1945.

The thrust of Green thought has been to spell out that every silver lining connotes a cloud; and the clouds, deep and dark, are gathering, as the woods-dark and deep, are disappearing; water clean and deep is receding. Malthus, warning that food supply would outstrip the growing population, is again being heard-this time more seriously! Population, pressure is shredding the fragile structure of our ecosystems. If overpopulation leads to overgrazing and over farming in ecologically fragile areas by marginalised sections having less and less sustainable land as well as overfishing by the mechanised trawlers (a modern symbol of progress) cause land degradation and paucity of seafood. Lesser population of the west, owing to consumerist life-style of the well-off, draw more on natural resources. Per capita, the small population of the North consume more water, energy and gasoline and produce more wastes and pollution than the over populated South!

So also the Green have shattered our faith in technology, which was bandied about for its potentiality to get us out of the fix. Green revolution, Chernobyl, Three Miles Islands and exploding of the American space shuttle Challenger, September 11th 2001, etc., are grim reminders of the progress. And Green politics thus settles human beings by humbling them first. It responds to an age of uncertainty by teaching us to know man's place and limits.

But it is not a doctrine of despair. It is a doctrine of caution and needed right and timely action; Thought driven *praxis*. The various informing principles as postulated by thinkers from Rachel Carson to Edward Goldsmith, from Frit of Capra to Ted Trainer, from William Ophuls to Vandana Shiva, from Herman Daley to Arne Naess, from Thoreau to Aldus Huxley, from Lester Brown to James Lovelock, from Gandhiji to Schumacher.¹

Major Pointers

The notion of *interdependence* is centrally important in the Green lexicon. The basic message that infinite growth in a finite system is impossible and destructive is the foundation - stone of Green political thinking. And its *holism* delineates their perspective. The interrelated nature of environmental problems is one reason why striking - plaster solutions or padding will not suffice : only root - and - branch change is required.

In sum they make us to draw following conclusion :

1. If the present trends of growth in industrialisation, pollution, world population, food production and resource depletion continue unchanged and unchecked, this planet will fast rush to its precipice, and the decline will be uncontrollable.
2. Subject to certain reorientations and conditions, it is possible to check and alter these growth trends and to establish a condition of ecopolitical and economic stability that is sustainable in the future.
3. If the world community decides to strive for this second scenario rather than the current first one, they should soon begin working on it, in praxis as well as thought.

The state of global equilibrium could even now be designed so that the basic material needs of each person on this earth are satisfied. As Gandhi stated : the earth has enough to satisfy the need of all but not to satisfy the greed of all.

As David Ganchar puts it/ :

"One of the most liberating impact of the Green movement is its flexibility, its capacity to make connections between disparate realms of thought".

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1. For details of extracts of their original texts, see Andrew Dobson (Ed) : *The Green Reader : Essays Toward a Sustainable Society*, (San Fiascisco, 1991).

As it is not a single-issue movements, and rather exactly the opposite, it has developed its far-reaching breadth and strength. The Green sustainable society is a Utopian society and *the Green Politics of environment justice for the poor and peace*. It is the poor who suffer the most as environment degrades. This evidenced in India as well in USA and Europe. Therefore the green movement, with its flexibility and wide spectrum of thought and experience, gives enough scope for its experimenting and growing in variances in the lands of Thoreau and Kally. Trainer and Carson, Donnella Meadows and Arne Naess, Schumacher and Gandhi.

iii) India : Grass-Roots Activism¹

Chipko

Almost at the same time as of the Stockholm Conference, an environmental movement, Chipko, started in the Himalayan region, the abode of nature, Initially started as a struggle to save local forest from commercial exploitation by contractors, in league with the forest functionaries, it developed the demands of community management of forest and other local resources. From Sunderlal Bahuguna's emphasis on the conservation of nature to C.P. Bhatt's emphasis on management of local resources by the girijans or indigenous people, thence gradually evolved the demand for ownership of natural resources by the local people and their use for the local people. Unlike in the west, where the middle class dominated the eco-movement, in India it were the tribals, women and the poor who participated in struggle, developed it as a major ecological movement and emerged as the key actions in the evolving development process. Chipko became the catalyst for development discourse and an alternative paradigm of development.

Significantly, such an important movement had its roots in the ideas and work of Gandhian centres in the Garhwal area where such leaders like Saraladevi and others had prepared workers for respecting nature and a harmonious relationship between man and nature. The Sarvodaya leader Sunderlal Bahuguna initiated the girijans and such forest dwellers to preserve their natural surroundings and fight by non-violent methods for conserving the natural resources them for their commercial greed. Bahuguna and Bhatt profiled the process of exploitation of the nature aimed at meeting the need of a modern, urban industrial civilization.

The Chipko movement became an epic in the history of ecological struggles in India. As Harsh Sethi has observed : Spread over two decades, thousands of hill people kept up their non-violent resistance movements, almost without unified leadership and in absence of any centralised organisation. It formulated new language of communication and new patterns of ecopolitical mobilization. Also with Chipko, other movements like Appiko, Swarnarekha, Tehri and Narmada changed the very items of political discourse.

1. Extracted from the author's book, *Narmada Project : Politics of Eco-Development* (New Delhi, 1994).

Struggles over land use (against limestone quarrying in the Himalayas), in Western Ghats, Central India and Gandhmardhan in Orissa, Singrauli in Madhya Pradesh and Swarnarekha have articulated the problems of marginal agrarian classes, fully irrigation, schemes causing waterlogging and callous policy for the displaced. Studies of cost of green revolution have helped in the formulation of the ecological critique of modern agriculture. Some struggles are also acquiring a wide social base. They also question the industrialized and technological vision of society, progress and modern civilization. The Gandhian question!

Development Debate

The struggles against big dams have created major conflicts and generated informed ecological debate in India. Bedthi, Ichampalli and Narmada projects in the West; Tehri and Vishnuprayag dams in the North; Thungbhadra and Ghatprabha in the South and Gandhak and Koel Karo schemes in the east are major cases in the point. From Silent Valley in the South to the Valley of Flowers in the North-from anti-Kakrapar atomic plant in the West to the Chilika lake in the East-the anti-big dam or other environmental movements have generated all the issues related to justice to the displaced persons, the design of the dam, and all the environment problems like destruction of forests, and sanctuaries, damage to wild life and rare species, silting, water logging, salinity etc. The policy of linkage with foreign aid agencies and government has also become controversial as in the case of Narmada and Tehri dams.

The past experience with the major dams have made the big dams controversial on logical grounds. Only the Sardar Sarover Project - SSP of Gujarat, in spite of the not-working of the anti-dam NGOs from grassroots to international levels and a massive adverse media coverage, has continued to be on. A truly liberal resettlement and rehabilitation package. Satisfactory implementation of this policy with the support of pro-project NGOs (More than 7,000 projected - affected families from Gujarat, M.P. and Maharashtra are already well resettled) and planned steps to take care of the environmental effects of the dam (in catchment area and the command from banding to stop silting to controlled water supply through volumetric method), massive afforestation (60 new trees being planted in place of one each that is felled in submerged area), and support of the NGOs and the people of Gujarat along with participation of the project - affected people in the resettlement decision process - all these promise to enable the Narmada Project to prove that environment and development are not antithesis but symbiotic. India can evolve a model of ecofriendly development model. In larger perspective, political philosophy has derived from grassroots questions and in the course of responding to the problems of the people residing in the valleys of the Narmada and Himalayan rivers. The issue-based struggles have over last few years broadened to the questioning of models of development and the processes of designing and executing the development projects. Distributive aspects of development in the present dominant model are also getting into focus. These struggles ask for redefining or expanding the conception of rights of different straiten the domain of political economy, for environmental corrective for better and informed resource use. Both developmental model or a substantive redefinition of man-man and man-nature relationship. But some movements like

Chipko which have taken an *ecological* dimension question the dominant development paradigm, its notions of progress and its premises of man-nature relationship.

Under the pressure to safeguard India's environment, the Government goaded by environmental groups has created the Ministry of Environment and Forest - potentially, the most powerful department in the world's largest bureaucracy.

On the other hand is the reality of people including farmers who aspire to get to the higher level as consumers. For this they will seek to earn more money by raising paddy and chilli in place of planning maize even if it meant using more water. Such an attitude is in direct conflict with any symbol of alternative development that the environmentalists lead to propose. As Anil Agarwal aptly commented : "the Indian environment movement has failed to develop any symbol like Gandhiji's *Charkha*, and could not even adopt the same one, because it stood for the same model of alternative development which was rejected in the race towards consumerism. The ecological movements, particularly against the big dams, have succeeded when they have been linked with economy, with the fight for social justice such as land and such sources for resettlement of the displaced persons. It is among the displaced in the big dam areas, that the environmentalists have been able to spread their message and only those have succeeded which relate ecology to the every day needs of the people". Where this has been effectively checked by the environmentalists and the Centre such as in the case of the post-Chipko Garhwal area, environmentalism is locally seen as pitted against the people's needs for wood, forest products and development concerns and it gives a different mode to political process.

As the water crisis deepens, there is the national call to link all major rivers of India. Is it feasible? What would be its social cost apart from the financial cost? Instead of improving and revitalising the traditional water management system, there is all out attempt to destroy it. Then there is the talk about water shed management! Mehta Patear's efforts may not wield the needed support given the realities of greed, fragmented approach and short sighted selfishness. We need to move beyond this.

(3) Five World-Views

Five basic worldview of modern environmentalism can be discerned from this review of environmental movements (as praxis) and thought related to them.

1. Exploitative position as 'cornucopian' technocentrism with infinite substitution possibilities.
2. Conservationist position as 'accommodating' techno-centrism supporting growth policy.
3. Preservationist position as 'communalist' ecocentrism favouring decentralized socio-economic system.

4. Anthropo-centrism placing man in the centre of this eco-centric preservationist position.
5. Eco-centrism accepting the intrinsic value of Nature and rights of non-human species, and therefore balance between man and nature. e.g. Zero-growth strategy (Daley), and organic agriculture of self sustaining societies (Naess and Gandhi). It is concerned more with the local rather than the global.

Mainstream Vs. Radical Environmentalism

There are two streams of environmentalism - the mainstream type and radical one. The latter stream terms the mainstream as 'reformist' environmentalism which a great majority of environmental organizations like Sierra Club, Audobon Society represent. The mainstream environmentalist avoid extremism, remaining committed to society and economy through persistent work within normal political and legal channels, while the radicals occupy the eco-extremist positions of the environmental spectrum. Eco-extremism is based on a doctrine of radical ecological salvation and has been rapidly gaining in during the past some years. In fact, the former are attacked as status quest and lobbyist by the eco-extremists for having "sold out to the despoilers" like the pollutant industries. The former denounce the radicals for seeking to dismantle the very modern civilization, "the very foundations on which a new and ecologically sane economic order must be built".

Radical environmentalism considers that "the human society, as now constituted, is utterly unsustainable and it must be reconstructed according to entirely different socio-economic logic. The dominant school of radical Green thought argues specifically that a sustainable society must be small in scale and modest in technology. They therefore reject any position seeking merely to reform, and thus perpetuate, a society that they regard as intrinsically destructive if not actually evil". The radical movement questions and criticizes the struggle for environmental reform within the framework of liberal democracy.

The major plank of radical environmentalism rests on four main premises:

- (1) That primal or primitive peoples exemplify how we can live in harmony with nature and with each other,
- (2) Thorough going decentralization, leading to local autonomy, is necessary for ecological and social health,
- (3) Technological advance, if not scientific progress itself is inherently harmful and dehumanizing, and
- (4) The capitalist market system is inescapably wasteful and destructive.

These views are sustained by the belief that economic growth is by very definition, unsustainable as the globe will suffer from resource limitations. They, therefore, seek to abandon the present-day urban, industrial culture and capitalist

system in order to return to nature and to this earth. The call is for a simple existence and a more direct relationship between mankind and nature. Economic growth must come to an end. Only village based, low-tech, agrarian development strategies will allow poor societies to fulfill their basic human needs. Here, there are deep shades of Gandhian thought regarding our modern civilization, and the role and use of technology in the Green radicalism, (But it is the method of rolling back the current dominant civilisational and ecological strands that Gandhi differs from the Green radicalism).

With the earth's falling health becoming more visual, the radical Greens and their strident philosophy seeking forceful action get justification. The eco-extremists adopted non-violent ways of civil disobedience whether while harassing Icelandic whaling vessels, or chaining themselves to ancient trees in the pacific North-west. Some however dismantled the machinery used for excavating the earth for a dam construction project, or rendering the trucks useless by taking out some of their parts which otherwise would be used for logging the trees in a national park or old growth forests.

As theoretical level also certain serious flaws of eco-radicalism have been discerned. The eco-radicals threaten the environment simply by fuelling anti-environmental counter movement. When Christopher Manes, a radical Green calls for total destruction of civilization, many begin to listen to the voices of reaction. The extremists, 'monkey-wrenching' trend of initiatives of the eco-extremists like the Earth First! group dampen the public support from a large mass of moderate people. The anti-ecological forces like the so-called "wise use movement" to take advantage of such extremism calling certain environmental philosophies as representing nothing less than mental illness. There is the immediate spectre of a few radicals actually opposing environmental reforms for some radical Green conclude that "reform environmentalism" is worse because "by correcting short-term symptoms, it postpones the necessary reconstruction of the entire relationship with the natural world! But they will bring down the planet to apocalypse by removing and reform opportunities for improving its health through a number of eco-legislative measures and prudent redressal acts and action.

More environmentalists now insist that a sustainable economy must be based on solar energy. Well taken! But the radicals' agenda calls for total decentralization, deurbanisation, economic autarchy, a ban on most forms of high technology and total dismantling of capitalism. But such steps would only prevent the man's capacity to arrest ecological degradation by appropriate legislation and the new eco-technology, prevent future improvements in solar power, de-leading of the gasoline and treatment of the effluents, etc. And it will destroy the very gains that have already been made on this front. Their programme would undercut the very foundations of all technological research and development. The systematic dismantling of large industrial organisations in favour of small ones would likely result in a substantial increase in pollution, for a few small-scale factories are in position to devise or afford adequate pollutions minimisation equipment and expenses. Again administrative control of one large industry causing pollution through law and inspection is more effective than looking after the group of disparate small units.

The notion of "deep ecology" that "the Nature knows best" is meaningless in a world already remade to anthropogenic contours. Pristine purity of nature now belongs to a realm of fantasy. Only thorough going human, albeit prudent, intervention can "preserve biological diversity that still remains, say in the tropical forests, until the time when a more advanced and benign human society begins to let nature reclaim more of the earth". Merely "Liberating Zoos" will not help save the earth. Responsible environmentalists rather realize that such actions would only ensure the extinctions of the already endangered animal species which are currently bred in Zoological gardens. Again, tribal groups may live lightly on the earth, but often only because their population densities are low. But that is not practicable for the vast multitude of humanity to either depend on the primal resources of nature or to immense in the intricate webs of natural world. If all Indians were to flee from their cities, rural populations will soar and forests as well as wildlife habitat will proportionately diminish. If the radical credo, "split wood, not atoms" is fully observed the West will find widespread indoor carbon monoxide poisoning and the on going destruction of the woodlands of California and the Western regions. The pollution threat of wood stoves can be mitigated by the use of catalytic conversers; developed by capitalist corporation. And biogas plants are designed and promoted by followers of Gandhi and Mao-not by the Earth Firsters!

If the economy's capacity for further on going research, development and expansion is paralysed, our future would turn out to be one that would remind us to the environmental nightmare of Poland in 1980s, with a stagnant economy continuing to rely on outmoded, pollution belching industries causing soot-choked regions, acid rain and suffocating winter air pollution. The Easter Europe is a grim reminder of the relationship between economic stagnancy and environmental devastation.

In this context all the four essential premises of radical environmentalism are controverted on the basis of empirical record.¹

(i) "Primal" economics, rather than being in harmony with nature can be actually highly destructive as evidenced by the degradation of forests and forest land by tribals or local people like the Vanavasis once drawing adequate sustenance like the live 'Fs' (Food-fruits fell-firewood, fodder, fertilizers and fibre) from nature.

(ii) Decentralized, small-scale political situations can be a violent, parochial and ecologically wasteful as village panchayats under toughies allowing encroachment of public/grazing land and the surrounding waste land in villages have been noticed.

(iii) Technological advance if in misguided direction, can be checked and rerouted so that we get clean technology, e.g. electricity, biogas and solar power substituting fossil fuels like coal, gas and petrol can be generated by a ecologically benign technology on Gandhian lines and as propounded by Schumacher. The technology baby should not be thrown out alongwith bath water.

1. Christopher Stone : *The Goat is Older than Man : Global Environment and Human Agenda* (Princeton, 1993), pp.9-10.

(iv) Capitalism, as competitive system of free market despite its serious social flaws, is the economic system in a liberal democracy resilient enough to assure a more benign human presence on the earth. Ecological grassroots movements can emerge and become effective only in a liberal democracy.

Many eco-radicals pleaded for a massive ideological campaign in order to transform popular perceptions, leading both to a fundamental change in life style and to a large-scale reconstruction of society. But their effort on the common people has been minimal. The West Europe was influenced by Green politics during 1970s and mid 1980s. But it has recently plummeted in Scandinavian countries and Germany, Green political parties, after the initial upward trends of electoral performance face a stagnant condition. However this has changed in Germany where Greens is a ruling coalition partner. In USA, in spite of several decades of eco-radical propaganda and some effective programmes, "the general public remains wedded to consumer culture and creature comforts".

Most Green radicals denounce moderate environmentalists who are willing to seek compromises with groups or corporation with opposing political philosophies. Since, compromise (and consensus, if possible) in one form or another, is a pre-requisite to any kind of political action, the quest for ideological purity in the end only undercut the prospects for change for the better.

The Third World should carefully weigh the logic of both these positions, compare it with its own requirements and experience and steer clear at mid-stream from the extreme and mainstream of environmentalism.

India should carefully distinguish between qualitative economic growth and quantitative growth. More of services need to be produced rather than more material consumption articles. There is a need for nonconsumptive forms of economic growth. More importantly, recent economic progress has come to require less physical, material supports rather than more. And it demands a certain dematerialization of value, based on miniaturization and development of light weight, energy-efficient composite materials. New substitutes can minimize the incidence of depletion of natural resources. The replacement of copperwire by fibre optics and of leather suitcases by fibre suitcases are prime examples. "While the global and national economics cannot grow indefinitely in volume it can continue to expand in value by producing better goods and services even more efficiently.¹ "Economic growth of this type is essential. Only a strongly expanding economy can generate the capital requisite to retool our economy into one that does not consume the earth in feeding itself. This is rather more vital in the case of the Third World where only steady expansion of economic base can breach the linkages in developing nations, between rural desperation and land degradation. Genuine development requires certain forms of economic growth, participation in global economy, but both conditioned by ecological prudence.

1. Christopher Stone, *Ibid*, p.10.

Thus, as John Young averts, neither the ideology of back to nature' nor experiments with environmental utopia is useful because it is possible to groom even industrial society to recover a part of its original innocence, just as it is possible for the contemporary non-industrial society to preserve it in the wake of carefully charted course of industrialization "But the formidable fruit of knowledge having been eaten, the task for the industrial society is (more) formidable",¹ and difficult.

Gandhi's critique of the contemporary (British) India was directed against the unimpaired industrialization of the Indian economy and growing dependence on the machine for their cultural and spiritual insensibility as well as for their economic adverse effects like the breakdown of the rural economy and small scale industries. Based on Gandhian premises, Schumacher in his seminal work, *Small is Beautiful* (1973) gave a non-Marxist critique of capitalist system and a capitalist critique of Marxism and Leninism. Like Gandhi he made it clear that *what he opposed was technological determinism rather than technological development*. His philosophical stance was directed to a new generation in the developed countries of the West.

Gandhi's distrust of technology as it had developed and had been used become salient here. So also his dependence on voluntarism and the mass of the people rather than the state for development. His confidence in the local community and in the decentralized structure of governance and development through the oceanic circles of village communities like the village panchayats. And his insistence, in words and behaviour, on using the natural resources like water rather frugally and wisely, preference for organic agriculture and traditional rural economy and village industries, spinning and use of khadi also logically emanated out of such thinking. His insistence on simple living and entire way of life was based on ideological critique of materialism and technology as well as consumerist lifestyle of the West. His distrust of the state made him look to the local communities for economic well being and ecological balance. This was in essence his "politics of sustainable society". Gandhi thus becomes more relevant in the new phase of "post-environmentalism". As observed by John Young. In any case radical reforms are more feasible and successful in local and community organisations. In view of the challenges to "the survival of mankind", the rise of a new Green revolution", is a force to reckon with, will facilitate the transition to the post industrial society,² where Gandhi with his post-modern thought needs to be reinterpreted.

(4) Toward Eco-Political Theories

Environmental theory is concerned with participatory and distributive issues. The environmental problems were perceived as a "crisis of participation" since 1960s (when it first spawned) whereby excluded groups sought to ensure a

1. John Young, *Post-Environmentalism* (London, 1990).

2. Underlined by Zaheer M. Quraishi in his review of John Young's book, *Ibid* in *Gandhi Marg*, October, December 1991.

more equitable distribution of environmental "goods" (say, urban amenities) and the "bads" (pollution or waste dumps nearer the ghettos). In the next decades, it developed facets of civil right movements and increased its concern for more grass-roots participation in decision making regarding environmental laws and their applications. It forced its way in having a say in the usage of land, water and forest resources. New critiques were built up and theoretical sensitivity was expressed e.g. Rachel Carson's *Silent spring* and Murray Bookchin's *Our Synthetic Environment*. Hugo Stretton gave his social democratic analysis of environmental crisis in his *Capitalism, Socialism and the Environment*.

While critiquing on the problems of industrial society. Herbert Marcuse and Jürgen Habermas also discussed its environmental dislocations and questioned technocratic rationality. The counter-culture movements and the New Left questioned the life style of the West and its exploitation of nature. But their revolutionary goal after all limited itself to "decentralization and self management of power and resources" (Bookchin, Roszak and Reich). Again, they were anthropocentric (Man-centric), though emancipatory theorists.

In the Ecologist's *Blueprint for Survival* and the Club of Rome's *The Limits to Growth*, their basic message has pinpointed on the dangers of population growth, resource consumption and ecological degradation. The Brundtland Report *Our Common Future* and the Annual State of the World Reports (1983-1994) continue to reinforce this message.

Meanwhile, search was attempted for deeper cultural transformations along alternative, nonauthoritarian institutions that would encourage a more cooperative and democratic response to the environmental crisis.

More radical emancipatory theorists have emphasised cultivation of an ecological society, resting on the principles of social ecology in order to serve the vital needs of both human as well as non-human nature. At the extreme is the medical eco-theory or Deep Ecology, "Nature for itself" reflects the 'deep ecology' positions in the current environmental debate.

The emancipatory ecopolitical theorists had directed their attention towards revitalizing the civil society rather than, or "in addition to the state". They have tried to find ways of integrating the concerns of ecology movements with other social movements, say related to peace, tribals, woman and human rights and the Third World aid and development.

They have directed their critique against classical theories of liberalism and Marxism. The emancipatory ecopolitical theory rejects "free market" liberalism (Blue model) and neoconservatism as well as state-centric management of development and natural resources (Red model). But the modern ecopolitical thought retains the enduring liberal values of tolerance for diversity, basic human rights and for limited Government. In this sense it is a post-rather than anti-liberal political theory. At the same time, it focuses its concern for distributive

justice and the disadvantaged in a participative framework. It is thus also not an anti-but post-Marxist political theory as well.¹

Thus what we need is a transvaluation and fresh ecocentrically based search for a theory and an eco-worldview. A judicious blending of theory and praxis, rooted in the ideas of the Green and Gandhi can provide a fruitful basis for such an understanding of this crisis and search for a cogent eco-political theory.

Eco-political analysis from Roszak to Rodman and Commoner to Comfort and theorists of Gaia and Deep Ecology have characterized ecological crisis as a crisis of participation, a crisis a survival, a crisis of culture and character and a concern for distribution. The Green political theory has developed its concern to solve and resolve these intercalated crisis while also offering new opportunities for social emancipation, cultural reform and renewal and a more equitable life of quality for the class and mass.

Robyn Eckersley has emphasized that only a thoroughgoing economic Green political theory could provide a kind of comprehensive framework needed to bring about an enduring resolution to the multi-faceted ecological crisis. This is provided by an egocentric theory as ecocentrism "represents the cumulative wisdom of various currents of modern environmental thought."²

Eckersley has shown how eco-Marxism, Critical theory and eco-socialism, the three families have been in the anthropocentric stream. They turned out to be the active kind of discrimination against the non-human world. Their exclusive focus on human well-being implied the systematically ignored special interests and needs of the non-human world. Habermassian critical Theory (communicative ethics), for example, is restricted to serving the interests of human speaking participants", non human world is simply neglected", It is thus anthropocentric. So also ecosocialism evinces no direct concern for the well-being of the non-human nature.

Eco-anarchists are more ecocentric on the other hand. Less concerned with ushering in general political and economic structural change, they emphasize the cultural renewal by establishing exemplary ecological communities within the shell of existing society. With a shade of Gandhian thought, ecoanarchism asks people to exercise existing freedom to engage in small scale, local experiments. This helps to develop peaceful ways of facilitating constructive disintegration of Industrialised society. Thus ecoanarchism offers to develop "an appropriate ecocentric emancipating culture" that inculcates "a democratic ethos and a sense of personal, civic and ecological responsibility". Although it is difficult to relinquish the institutional gains of parliamentary democracy and the whatever

1. Robin Eckersley : *Environmentalism and Political Theory : Towards An Eco-centric Approach* (UCL Press), Introduction, 1992.

2. *Ibid*, Part II.

imperfect check, balances and correctives they provide against populism as well as abuse of power until the point when an ecocentric consciousness and behaviour substantially permeates our political culture, its contribution to the development of a decentralized polity with ecocentric culture is an important landmark in the development of ecopolitical thought, it is also operationalised as a *praxis* by the Greens.

In practical context, the tension is currently seen in the mundane Green politics between the mainstream and radical environment movements in USA and between the realist and the fundamentalist groups of the Green movement and Green parties in Europe. They first want to take the electoral route, gain political power to bring in the green society and the latter seek to avoid being corrupted by what is called 'the power politics of hierarchical institutions. They would rather strive to bring about the change at grassroots level to help flourish ecoculture.

The problem is : can we substitute only voluntary action and "small experiments" but not address *systemic* problems through macro institutional mechanisms? Or is it possible to retain the market as a basic system of resource allocation but with the introduction of a greater range of macrocontrols (through a democratic state) on market forces in order to break down excessive concentration of power, protect the fragile ecosystem integrity and biodiversity, and at the same time promote greater equity or social justice (in use of natural resources and well-being)? Such controls either from grassroots pressures or macrocontrols should monitor the entrepreneurs to remain sensitive to the social and ecological consequences of their activities, and promote socially informed consumer spending.

After critical dialogues with the main currents of Green political thought Eckersley sketches a broad-brush picture of a possible ecocentric polity. Such an ecocentric polity will have a democratic state legislature in a multilevel decision-making structure which will be more responsive to decisions of local-regional bodies. There will be greater dispersal of political and economic powers both within and between local communities; a greater sharing of resources, a far more extensive range of macrocontrols on market activity and the flowering of an ecocentric emancipatory culture. At the same time adequate higher order legislative assemblies, institutional checks and balances will prevent excessive parochialism and yet become "conducive to steering our way out of the ecological crisis in the present context" irrespective of whether an ecocentric perspective and concentric polity are widely shared. This picture of an ecocentric polity reminds one of the Gandhi! – dispersed thoughts on decentralised polity and ecology.

Cultivation of an ecocentric culture is crucial to achieving a lasting solution to the ecological crisis. Such a culture was embedded in Gandhian ideas and behaviour. For only in such a political community with ecological sensitivity a general consensus in favour of the kinds of far-reaching, substantive reforms that will protect biodiversity and life-support systems can be achieved.

Such a Comprehensive Ecocentric Perspective

- i) accepts the need for the protection of large tracts of representative ecosystems;
- ii) the development of a human population policy that respects the carrying capacity of ecosystems;
- iii) the "rights" of other species to share the Earth's life-support system; and
- iv) a fundamental re-evaluation of human needs, technologies, and lifestyles in such a way as
 - (a) to minimize energy and resource consumption and
 - (b) minimize or eliminate pollution;
- v) the provision of adequate compensation whenever ecological reforms are likely to produce inequitable consequences for certain social groups, classes, or nations.
- (vi) It should be brought about by non-violent means.

Though many environmentalists do not share this thesis, it is a blueprint of post-environmentalism in which discerning theorist will find the fabric of Green political thought woven with fine threads of Gandhian thought.

The *Ecocentric Green + Gandhian Thought and Praxis* will blend from the utopians and pragmatists, and the extremists, creativity and critical analysis, grassroots activists and institutional managers if it is to achieve its aims in the long, very long run.

Such a blending will sustain or fall through on its ability to generate possibility of alternatives to the advanced post-industrial civilization and consumerist culture as aimed both by the capitalist and 'socialist' systems. Green + Gandhi offers to generate new socialist system. Green + Gandhi offers to generate new ways of seeing and new vision of an alternative ecopolitical society that prepares mankind to visualize what it means to live, rather differently, and with greater ecological sensitivity and security.

(5) Gandhi and Environment

Significantly, the interest in Gandhi in India returned through the West. And it came to us via the external stimuli-ecology, awakening to evils of consumerism in a section of Western intellectuals, and the quest for peaceful method to bring about social transformation. Evils of industrialism, environmental crisis causing atrophy of main and depletion of natural resources oriented our search for the solution toward Gandhi's thought. Several decades back Gandhi had strongly stated similar views on these problematics of materialistic civilization, patterns of development and return to nature. The Third World's interlinked problems of ecology, technology diffusion or transfer and the gap between the rich and the poor are now sought to be related to his views.

The environmental crisis brought out the link between technology, economy and culture (life-style). Gandhi's views on them have direct or indirect relevance for them.

The environmental movement is premised on the view that environmental protection is man-centred. The movement is now not merely confined to the first level effects, such as health effects, toxic chemicals in the air, water and food, energy problem, population growth etc., but also with the second level effects, which relates to "effects on human sensitivity and the desire for an environment which is pleasing, comfortable and convenient" not merely in an economic sense. In addition the third level effects have now come into prominence. "These relate to the general balance between man, economy and nature", which, states J.D. Sethi, Gandhi alone had the vision to make the starting point. He went further and asked for a system which, besides satisfying the conditions at all the three levels, still kept them subject to spiritual (cultural) needs of man, which means material comforts have to yield to cultural and spiritual needs. Of course, this problem arises only above and not below poverty line.

Gandhi, in this context warned against three uninterrupted movements which create the problem of environmental degradation viz., (a) Unhindered urbanization requiring pillage of natural environment, (b) unchecked industrialisation and imbalance in nature, and (c) profit motives of capitalist system at the cost of developing nations. Gandhi expected a balanced approach all along the line so as to threat neither man nor nature. Gandhi was ignored when he insisted on such equilibrium between technology, economy and society. But experiences have forced us to turn to him with appreciation. In this context, Gandhi's thought not only is in consonance with the Green thought, but in a way he has the ring of post-environmentalism.

Gandhi : Man and Nature

About Nature, he said : "We are opposed to slavery which was more or less rooted out from our society. It requires our going a step further in the same direction to feel opposed to slavery of nature's forces. It is bound to sound ridiculous to some but we should be compassionate to nature in the same way in which we should be compassionate to human beings".¹

Again Gandhi was insistent that the more Nature was over-powered the more alienated man would become from Nature. The modern environmental movement has now come around this theme.²

Gandhi did not ignore the need for sustainability either. He stated: "A wise man utilizes the present to undertake an act of production, as it were. An ordinary man treats the present as an act of consumption. People of the West are now beginning to realize that they have sacrificed the future for the sake of the present".³

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1. Quoted by J.K. Mehta : *Gandhian Thought - An Analytical Study* (New Delhi, 1985), p.136.
 2. J.D. Sethi : *Gandhi Today*, (New Delhi, 1978), p.81.
 3. Mehta : *Op. cit.*, p.143.

Environmental Elites on Gandhi

According to an empirical study³ of environmental attitudes of activists, the Indian environmental actors agree on some significant core values. The value of life and its right to exist in full diversity, which is essential to Hindu philosophy, is strongly affirmed by all categories of respondents.

The Greens respect life and natural diversity, and dislike the technological hubris of the Western developmental model. The distrust international development programmes, nuclear power, and biotechnology because of their environmental risks, and are alive to the future dangers of the green house effects. Their alternative is a sustainable economy mixing traditional and modern production methods, with recycling to cut energy use. They advocated voluntary simplicity following the Gandhian tradition, and respect for the rights of women, tribals, and the scheduled castes who bear valuable traditional knowledge and values. Only grassroots economic development based on these values can be environmentally sound.

After studying environmental perceptions of the Indian elites, Peritore has juxtaposed Western Vs the Indian environmentalism. He provides a model of the Indian environmental problematic that fits the environmental opinion types developed by him within the nation's complex political culture. The four cells in his typological diagram contain three types of opinion, plus the panchayats on which so much of their efforts focus.

In his 'Dharmic' administrative model values of maintenance of stability and order through precise performance of traditional duties are equally important. "The Gandhian model sees society as an organic whole dictating morality, selflessness, duty, and the value of work without reference to caste.³ N. Patrick Peritore : "Environmental Attitudes of Indian Elites - Challenging Western Postmodernist Models" in *Asian Survey* (Berkeley, USA), August 1993.

Peritore finds that the Greens are both Gandhian and Dharmic in their stress on morality and action in the communal situation. "They have revived and modernized important Indian traditions through application of ecological science, and thus have strong legitimacy in national politics and in local movements like Chipko and Appiko". Peritore finds the eco-developers at the intersection of the Community Development and Gandhian models and thus tend toward modern pragmatic politics and local pilot projects.

The Gandhian ethos provides the environmental movement with a coherent ethic, metaphysic, and method on the national political scene. "But the official Gandhism ideology of India is honoured in the breach by powerful corporate, family, centre and state government elites, and by an increasingly powerful political mafias.¹

India's environmental movement has the advantages of Gandhian thought, strong links to native cultural eco-management practices and a formidable intellectual and voluntary infrastructure. But its sophistication and strength are

dissipated by corrupt and bureaucratically tangled government and by an ecological and population crisis that surpasses known techniques of environmental repair and management. India has the philosophical heritage, Gandhian ideas and the recent environmental experience which should guide our action and develop *praxis* to put the movement in the vanguard for ecological and cultural survival.

Gandhian philosophy through the Chipko has made its impact on the generally growing consciousness of India's serious environmental crisis, "It has led to an alternative vision of the future that question planned high-energy, urban, technocratic development". As Patrick Peritore notes: The (Indian) Green adhere to the Gandhian legacy of nonviolent resistance. He quotes an environmental activist - publisher :

"Gandhi spoke of self-sufficiency and equal distribution of resources"¹. Nehru wanted to meet the challenge of the West, through Western methods. But such prevalent ideology does not understand the environmental limits. "We must strive for human and women's rights, and for ecological goals, with non-violent means, with Gandhian tactics. The reverse of technology is humility. We need humility instead of seeking to dominate and manage nature."² Gandhian relevance is felt here.

Relevance of Gandhian Thought

The alternative view on man-nature relationship and use of natural resources was rather sidelined during the euphoric period (1951-1985) of growth. It was growthmanship which ignored the Gandhian view.

Since 1998 Gandhi has argued for a model of society and state with villages as the primary unit and peasants as the crucial agent of production. The simple living austerity and discriminate use of water were the 'achars' or behavioural ramifications of his 'Back to Nature' approach. In his *Hind Swaraj*, he gave a well formulated critique of the modern industrial civilization, the Western vision that shaped it and an alternative Indian vision of the same, To Gandhi as to Rabindranath, nature is a living and life-giving source of water, food Human life and culture are based on and should have an intrinsic relationship with Nature. In Gandhian paradigm, respect to Nature is as intrinsic as respect for diverse traditions, cultures and patterns of community living and livelihood.

The post-Gandhi modernistic model dominated by the Nehruvian world-view of development found it romantic and the leftist ideologies close to as well as opposition to the establishment laughed him out as an utopian.

Either considered as rooted in an innocent understanding of a growing complex society, and in an idyllic vision of our past the Gandhian view was considered to be essentially reactionary by the modernist elite, Nehruites and the Marxists have begun to coverage around the Gandhian thought.

1. *Ibid.*

2. *Ibid.*

The North's conceptualisation of environmental issue amounts to an elitist "sacred groves for the rich" strategy which resonates with the major international political issue in environmental protection (Madhav Gadgil and Anil Gupta). The necessity of coming to terms with local practices, knowledge and culture was illustrated by Madhav Gadgil and Anil Gupta at the international conference on 'Common Property, Collective Action and Ecology' (Bangalore, August (1993)¹ A touch of deep ecology' ideology also has brought in historical changes in evaluation of the Sundarbans in West Bengal from 'a useless and dangerous swap' to valuable wetlands eco-system.

According to Gandhian ethics the whole development 'mythology' as Darryl D' Monte calls it, needs to be questioned. The idea of progress is woven with the symbols of steel plants, electricity and the like. Not that they are useless and must be given up. But the question is to relate them with our needs and needs of a primarily agrarian society. To sustain, it what is needed is irrigation, land, and land reform. Technology should be taken away from huge dams, mega projects and intensive modern agriculture to the extent it is possible. Whatever a substitute is feasible and relevant to big dams. India should go in for small dams, and minor irrigation, reservoirs and the like irrigation schemes. As D' Monte states", Calculations have shown that instead of 10 plants in HPJ (gas) project, you could have community biogas plants in each of India's 6,00,000 villages. Can you understand the change this would bring about-for the first time? They would have energy at home, for cooking, even for irrigation. Now this is the kind of technology that will change life in villages".²

The use of raw material and other natural resources in a sustainable manner is a Gandhian principle, one which is not still rated in the Western living pattern but which is quite relevant for India.

Two centrally theoretical concerns can be constructed from this.

(i) Can democracy (movements) support environmental integrity, especially through common property and resource management on 'communal' lines?

(ii) What will be the impact of democracy on distributional equity? Local democracy like the Panchayati Raj as instituted by the Indian state, though welcomed on ideational lines, is not conducive to both the aims-common property management and equity to the poor. Thus as on Gandhian lines, local democracy and decentralization tend to support a social ecology agenda than a state-centric ecology. Deep ecology or radical environmentalism with the 'monkey wrenching' and the like abrasive techniques of protests but expressed through a non-violent peaceful way also will help us to move away

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1. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 3-10 July, 1993.
 2. Darryl D' Monte in his interview by Shashi Bellga on World Environment Day (1993); *The Times of India*, 5 June 1993.

from state-centric ecology. Thus a theoretical convergence can be discerned in the post-modern thinking and Gandhian thought related to environmental thought and praxis.

Gandhi's was the third way, which rejected both liberal individualism and socialist collectivism, both of which were abstractions and artifacts without anchor in the actual life of the people, their needs and concerns, and their symbiotic relationship with nature, the changing seasons, the sunshine, rainfall and cold weather.¹ The traditional way of life, as opposed to urban, industrial life pattern, was deeply, almost religiously, related to Nature. Gandhi also delineated the *modus operandi* of the Swadeshi in terms of limited wants and the capacity of the local surroundings and resources to meet the needs of the people.

Gandhi's preference for austerity, organic farming as well as Khadi and Village Industries represents the alternative life-style and ethos.

In the preceding pages, we have encapsulated major aspects and basis of the rich discourse on the issue in the environmental field, in the assessment of social costs of environmental degradation, with a theoretical focus on the ethics of natural resources use. Here, again Gandhi sounds relevant.

"Nature produces enough to meet the needs of all the people, but not enough to satisfy the greed of every one".

Such thoughts of his are still very much on the fringe, but they have the possibilities of becoming part of mainstream transformation, provided the Gandhian movement can address these issues sensitively and deftly, and grasp the opportunities that are being offered by the contemporary environmental crisis.

It is in the context that a judicious blending of the Green and Gandhi, at the level of thought and action, can help to usher us in a post-modern age and post-industrial eco-cultured society.

Epilogue: S. Jeyapragasam

Mahatma Gandhi addressed both the symptoms and roots of the eco-problem as well as its immediate, short-term and long-term aspects and also at the macro, middle and micro levels in a holistic way, roots in tradition taking full account of the contemporary realities and futuristic needs. He blended vision, theory, strategy and action. Mahatma Gandhi's world view to defence policy reflect his eco-philosophy Sanitation and hygiene were high in the agenda.

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1. Ali Ashraf : "Gandhian View of Sustainable Development' in *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, July - September 1993.

Exercise

1. Discuss the current environmental crisis and show how Mahatma Gandhi is relevant in this context.
2. Give an outline of Eco-life style.
3. How Gandhi lived in tune with nature.
4. Examine Gandhi's eco-friendly behaviour.

Application/Field Work

1. Do you live in tune with nature? can you improve it further.
2. Encounter three persons who have eco-friendly life styles.

**The Spiritual Practice - Prayer and Worship -
Religion as a Way of Life. From Religion to Spirituality -
Ethical Religion - Inter-Religious Dialogue.**

Some deny the spiritual life. Some separate and isolate spiritual and bodily life. For the former materialism is the only reality. For the later materialism may be an illusion. Gandhi went beyond the duality of body and spirit. He realized their equal importance. However as long as we live, here, we live through our body. That is why Gandhi gave top most priority to the removal of poverty and he wanted to ensure basic living condition to the last person on top priority basis. For him that is the primary activity.

Even those who accept the equal importance of body and spirit, some stop with individuality and some others emphasise the group at the expense of the individual. Even those who include both individual and the society in their scheme stop with merely a section of humanity and merely with the humanity alone.

For Mahatma Gandhi body, mind (emotions), intellect, spirit and ever expanding relationship with fellow human beings, to cover ultimately all people, ever expanding relationship with other living beings and then matter and ever expanding relationship with God/(truth) are all of importance and they are all interconnected.

Let us explain this. Gandhi talks about voluntary poverty not merely to avoid nutritional excess but primarily as spiritual penance, as a way of participating in others' sufferings and to facilitate the starving to share some of our excess. It is also a symbolic way of sharing the pains of others.

There are some liberation theologians who take pleasure in social liberation and with that they end. But Gandhiji wanted social liberation and he would never compromise on that. But he would not give up prayer. The spirit's quest for God/Truth is something real for Gandhi and it is not to be given up on account of something else. That is why he proclaimed "to see God face to face" as one of his goals in life. He wanted "Swaraj", "Kingdom of God" for India and for the entire humanity.

Thus, in Mahatma Gandhi we find his individual spiritual quest, individual strive for excellence in all aspects of a person and for social upliftment and excellence. As he marched ahead in his journey, he shared these experiences and visions openly.

For some spirituality means simply following the "rules of an institutional religion". Mere mechanical repetition of things (words/rituals) may not lead to spiritual growth. For Gandhi every religions has good and bad (demonic) aspects. Gandhi considered ethics as the essence of all religions.

For Gandhi, since absolute truth is an unending and infinite quest, absolute ethics is also an unending quest. Religion is also a quest. What we have in terms of truth, religion and ethics are relative and we need to make more progress. This means all of them are open ended.

For some, religion often means the Institutional and ritual aspects only. Gandhi rejects this stand. For him religion is a way of life. For him no religion is perfect and religions are in the process of evolution.

If religion is a way of life, the basic principles/visions of religion should guide one's life. Jesus talks about being last about peace making, about returning good for evil, etc. A person who calls himself as a Christian but is involved in "cut-throat" competition to become number one in money making without looking for the consequences, and who is bloodthirsty and revengeful, becomes a contradiction, according to Gandhi. For Gandhi, scriptures are economic doctrines. But in reality, often there is no relationship between one's own religion and his/her day to day life. Gandhi points out contradictions. When he saw the Harischandra Purana, he wanted (and decided) to behave like Harischandra truthfully under all circumstances. Similarly, he wanted to serve others like Shrivatsa.

Gandhi was fully aware of the limitations, shortcomings and demonic aspects of religions and scriptures. It is not only the result of errors in interpretations but also there are some inherent errors in them. There is also the contextual aspects. Gandhi called for an expert panel to go into the scriptural passages and other religious aspects which degrade women and correct them accordingly. He rejected the practice of untouchability in total and challenged the theological base if any, in that. He reinterpreted *Bhagavad Gita* to mean Karma Yoga, selfless right action and doing things as sacrifice and dedication. He rejected the conventional meaning of calling/urging to go for a just/dharma war.

Gandhi slowly converted his home into a small community in South Africa. Then he had to shift and merge his home into a larger community (Phoenix Farm: Tolstoy Settlement...). His community was in fact the world in miniature. It consisted of multi-religious, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual people. Then came the question how to pray together?

Gandhi's quest for God was there all the time. His individual prayer and ethics were like eternal streams without any break. He insisted on "praying together". This is community prayer. This need to pray together led to his vision of inter-religious prayer.

When he came to South Africa with his family and friends in 1896, there was a terrible storm before the ship could reach Durban. Many lost all hopes of survival. Then they started, in a very natural way, to pray according to their own different religious traditions. It was a soul stirring event and Gandhi realized the power of inter-religious prayer at once.

Gandhi's inter-religious prayer has evolved over a period of time. All his public prayers assumed the dimension of Inter-religious prayer. It consists of

scriptural passages and sacred prayers from different religious, devotional hymns, bhajans, silence and meditation and all people eating together.

Gandhi declared that the scriptures of the world are the common heritage of humanity and they belong to everybody. Gandhi made a deep study of the scriptures of the world. He called everyone to do so. This is for their own spiritual and other development.

Participation in the religious festivals and ceremonies of others, learning different religions from the good practitioners of those religions and independent experience and study were encouraged by Gandhiji. He saw pluralism as a basic fact of life and it is very much true in the Indian context. He expected pluralism to grow as we come more closer and closer.

Pluralism demands religious freedom, multi-religious development of the individual and respect for religions. Gandhi rejected mass conversion. This is bound to destroy religious coexistence.

Inter-religious relationship for social and spiritual development is the need of the hour. It is good and fortunate that there are diversities. These diversities are really blessings and they can help humanity with new insights, inspirations, guidance and resources.

Gandhi also was aware of the danger of learning wrong things from different religions. Inter-religious relations should not degenerate as mere learning and sharing wrong things and models.

Now let us see things in the words of Gandhi.

PRAYER IN GANDHIJIS OWN WORDS

I am not a man of learning, but I humbly claim to be a man of prayer.

Three of the greatest teachers of the world, Buddha, Jesus and Mohammed, have left an-impeachable testimony that they found illumination through prayer and could not possibly live without it.

Our physical health suffers, if we do not wash our bodies. Similarly the spirit becomes unclean, if the heart is not washed with prayer. Please therefore never be negligent in prayer.

Prayer is the only means of bringing about orderliness and peace, and response in our daily acts.

Prayer is the key of the morning and the bolt of the evening.

Works without faith and prayer are like artificial flowers without fragrance.

Worship and prayer are not to be performed with the lips but with the heart.

The man of prayer will be at peace with himself and with the whole world.

My religion teaches me that whenever there is distress which one cannot remove one must fast and pray.

God never answers prayers of the arrogant, not the prayers of those, who bargain with him.

Food for the body is not so necessary as prayer for the soul, for starvation is often necessary in order to keep the body in health but there is no such thing as prayer starvation. You, cannot, possibly have a surfeit of prayer.

Prayer is a confession of one's own unworthiness and weakness.

Prayer is not an asking. It is a longing of the soul.

Prayer is the first and the last lesson in learning the noble and brave art of sacrificing self.

Without prayer there is no inward peace.

(Bhavan's Journal, October 12, 1975)

On Ramanama

When I bow to a living person and he returns it, it is mutual exchange of courtesy and there is no particular merit about it. It may be sign of good breeding.

Temple going is for the purification of soul. The Worshipper draws the best out of himself.

In greeting a living being, he may draw the best out of the person greeted, if the greeting is selfless. A living being is, more or less, fallible like one self. But, in the temple, one worships the living God, perfect beyond imagination.

Letters written to living persons often end in heart breaking even when they are answered and there is no guarantee of their being always answered. Letters to God, who according to the devotee's imagination, resides in temples, requires neither pen nor ink nor paper, not even speech. Mere mute worship constitutes the latter which brings its own unfailing answer.

The whole function is a beautiful exercise of faith. Here there is no waste of effort, no heart breaking, no danger of being misunderstood. One must try to understand the simple philosophy lying behind the worship in temples or mosques or churches.

He will understand my meaning better, if he will realize that I make no distinction between these different abodes of God. They are what faith has made them. They are answers to man's craving, somehow to reach the unseen.

For the faithful Hindu, His incarnation is without blemish. Krishna of the Hindu devotee is a perfect Being. He is unconcerned with the harsh judgement of the critics.

Millions of devotees of Krishna and Rama have had their lives transformed through their contemplation of God by these names.

How this phenomenon happens. I do know, it is a mystery, I have not attempted to prove it.

Though my reason and heart long ago realized the highest attributes and name of God as Truth, I recognize Truth by the name of Rama. In the darkest hour of my trial, that one name has saved me and is still saving me.

It may be the association of childhood, it may be the fascination that Tulsidas has brought upon me. But the potent fact is there and as I write these lines, my memory revives the scene of my childhood when I used daily to visit Ramji Mandir adjacent to my ancestral home. My Rama then resided there. He saved me from my fears and sins. I know nothing against him.

Misdeeds might have taken place in the temple. Again I know nothing of them. Therefore they would not affect me.

What was and is true of me is true of millions of Hindus.

(Bhavan's Journal, March 27, 1967)

(Note : For the benefit of the students, here we have reproduced the original passages of Gandhiji about prayer, because the charm of the passage will be lost in paraphrasing them).

What Prayer Means? What is True Prayer?

Prayer literally means to ask for something. To ask God for something in a spirit of humility. However, it is not used in that sense. It is in the sense of praising or worshipping God meditation and self purification.

God is not some person outside ourselves or away from the universe. He pervades everything and is omniscient as well as omnipotent. He does not need any praise or petitions. Being immanent in all beings, He hears everything and reads our innermost thoughts. He abides in our hearts and is nearer to us than the nails are to the fingers.

God whom we seek to realize in Truth or to put it in another way. Truth is God. This Truth is not merely the truth we are expected to speak. It is that

which alone subsists by virtue of its own power and supports everything that exists. Truth alone is eternal: everything else is momentary. It is pure intelligence, as well as pure bliss. It governs the entire universe.

To propitiate this Truth is prayer, which in effect means any earnest desire to be filled with the spirit of Truth. In heart felt prayer the worshipper's attention is concentrated on the object of worship, so much so that he is not conscious of anything else besides. The identification of the worshipper with God comes only after much striving, self-suffering and self discipline and above all by self purification which is the essence of true and meaningful prayer. No matter whether the prayer we recite is the Hindu prayer or the Muslim or the Parsee. Its function is essentially the same purification of the heart.

The struggle between the forces of good and evil is ceaseless and eternal. The former have Truth and Non violence as weapons against the latter's falsehood, violence and brute force. If we enthrone God in our heart and keep him there always by our daily heartfelt prayers. We shall have no fear and lay for ourselves rich treasure in life. There is really only one prayer that we may offer "Thy will be done!"

(Extracts from Gandhiji's Writings from the *Harijan*)

1) Nature of Prayer

The Divine Mind is unchangeable, but that Divinity is in every one and everything - animate and inanimate. The meaning of prayer is that I want to invoke that Divinity in me... I beg it of myself of my Higher self, the Real Self, which with I have not yet achieved complete identification. You may therefore, describe it as a continual longing to lose myself in the Divinity which comprise all.

Prayer really is complete meditation and melting into the Higher Self, though one occasionally does lapse into imploration like that of a child to his father. I would not call it lapse. It is more in the fitness of things to say that I pray to God who exists somewhere in the clouds and the more distant. He is, the greater is my longing for Him and I find myself in His presence in thought. And thought you know has a greater velocity than light. Therefore the distance between me and Him though so incalculably great, is obliterated, he is so far and yet so near.

(*Harijan*, 19-3-39)

I believed that prayer is the very soul and essence of religion and therefore prayer must be the very core of the life of man for no man can live without religion. Bradlaugh, whose atheism is well known, always insisted on proclaiming his innermost conviction. He had to suffer a lot for thus speaking the truth, but he delighted in it and declared that truth is its own reward. Not that he was quite insensible to the joy resulting from the observance of truth. This joy however is not all worldly, but springs out of communion with the Divine. That is why I have said that even a man who disowns religion cannot and does not live without religion.

I have talked of the necessity for prayer, and through that I have dealt with the essence of prayer. We are born to serve our fellowmen, and we cannot properly do so unless we are wide awake. There is an eternal struggle raging in man's breast between the powers of darkness and of light and he who has not the sheetanchor of prayer to rely upon will be a victim to the powers of darkness. The man of prayer will be at peace with himself and with the whole world, the man who goes about the affairs of the world will be miserable. Apart therefore from its bearing on man's condition after death, prayer has incalculable value for man in this world of the living, prayer is the only means of bringing about orderliness and peace and repose in our daily acts. Take care of the vital thing and other things will take care of themselves. Rectify an angle of a square, and the other angles will be automatically right.

(*Young India*, 21-1-30)

Gandhiji considered selfless service as the highest religion and selfless service can be rendered only by those whose heart have been purged of passions like greed, aggressiveness, exploitation and hatred. Further he laid great emphasis on self-purification in which prayers play a very powerful and dominant role. Prayer for Gandhiji is neither a petition nor a praise. It is the longing of the soul and a search within ourselves to find out the divine spark within us. Speaking for himself Gandhiji declared, "I can do and often have without food for many days: but I cannot do without prayers even for a single day... prayer is the food for the soul and is even more essential for the well-being of the soul than is food for the maintenance of the body". It is interesting to note that in the whole career of Gandhiji, there is not a trace of any miracle. He did not resort to temple going very often or pilgrimage to sacred places or practising deep meditation for many years. However, he resorted to the right royal path of praying, fasting, taking vows and pledges and trying his best to follow the path of truth and nonviolence steadfastly. He introduced five more vows like equal respect for all religious (*Sarvadharmā Samābhava*) bread labour or manual labour (*Shareera shrama*), *Swadeshi Abhaya* and *Sparsha bhavana*, which are all relevant even now, after independence. Since Gandhiji was essentially a man of faith and prayer once remarked, "He who hungers for the awakening of the Divine in him, must necessarily fall back upon prayer". Real prayer according to Gandhiji prefers heart without words and it needs no speech and it must spring from the innermost recesses of one's heart spontaneously. In condition, prayer is a call to humility - an call for self purification and self surrender to the Almighty and an inward search for peace and tranquillity and unalloyed happiness and superior joy or ananda.

Gandhiji's religion may be characterized as ethical spiritualism. According to him any religion without moral foundation is no religion at all. In other words, religion and morality are the two faces of the same coin, wherein neither, of them could be separated from each other in fact. Gandhiji found the essence of religion in morality or ethics. In the words of Gandhiji, 'Morals, ethics and religion are convertible terms. A moral life without reference to religion is like a house built upon sand and religion divorced from morality is like sounding brass good only for making noise and for breaking heads. "Further, Gandhiji recognized that prayer is the very core of man's life and it is the most essential and significant part of

religion. According to Gandhiji prayer is a type of inward communication with good leading to the cleansing and purification of the soul, by removing the dense of ignorance and darkness. In short, prayer is an effective means to bring to the surface the divine element in every human being.

Supplication, worship, prayer are no superstitions; they are acts more real than the acts of eating, drinking sitting, walking. It is no exaggeration to say that they alone are real, all else is unreal.

Such worship or prayer is no flight of eloquence, it is no lip homage. It springs from the heart. If, therefore, we achieve that purity of the heart when it is 'emptied of all but love'; If we keep all the chords in order, they tune the 'trembling pan in music out of sight'.

Prayer needs no speech it is in itself independent of any sensuous effort. I have not the slightest doubt that prayer is an unfailing means of cleaning the hearts of passions. But it must be combined with the utmost humility.

(Autobiography, pp.51-52)

It is better in prayer to have a heart without words than words without a heart.

(Young India, 23-1-30)

Prayer is an impossibility without a living faith in the presence of God within.

(Young India, 20-12-'98)

Prayer is the first and the last lesson in learning the noble and brave art of sacrificing self in the various walks of life, culminating in the defence of one's nation's liberty and honour. Undoubtedly, prayer requires a living faith in God.

(Harijan, 14-4-'46)

Man often repeats the name of God parrot like and expects fruit from so doing. The true seeker must have that living faith which will not only dispel the untruth of parrot-wise repetition from within him, but also from the heart of others.

(Harijan, 15-5-'56)

It is easy enough to say, 'I do not believe in God'. For God permits all things to be said of him with impurity. He looks at our acts. And any breach of His Law carried with it, not its vindictive but, its purifying, compelling punishment. God's existence cannot be, does not need to be, proved God is. If He is not then so much the worse for us. The absence of feeling is a disease which we shall some day throw off *nolens volens*.

Prayer is not an asking. It is a longing of soul. It is a daily admission of one's weakness. The tallest among us has a perpetuate reminder of his nothing before death, disease, old age, accidents etc. We are living in the midst of death. What is the value of 'working for our own schemes' when they might be reduced to naught in the twinkling of an eye, or when we may be equally swiftly and unaware be taken away from them? But we may feel strong as a rock, if we

could truthfully say: 'We work for God and His schemes'. Then, all is as clear as day-light. Then nothing perishes. All perishing is then only what seems Death and destruction have then, but only no reality about them. For, death and destruction is then, but a change. An artist destroys his picture for creating a better one A Watch-maker throws away a bad spring to put in a new and useful one.

(Young India, 23-9-'26)

Prayer is the greatest binding force, making for the solidarity and oneness of the human family. If a person realizes his unity with God through prayer, no low no narrow provincialism or petty rivalries in the matter of language between an Andhra and a Tamilian, a Kanarase and a Malayalee. There will be no individual distinction between a touchable and untouchable a Hindu and a Mussalman, a Parsi, a Christian and a Sikh. Similarly, there would be no scramble for personal gain or power between various groups or between different member within a group.

The outer must reflect the inner. If we are in tune with God, no matter how big a gathering perfect quiet and order would prevail and even the weakest would enjoy perfect protection. Above all, realization of God must mean freedom from all earthly fear.

(Harijan, 3-3-'46)

Need for Prayer

As food is necessary for the body, prayer is necessary for the soul. A man may be able to live without food for a number of days as Mac Swiney did for over 70 days - but, believing in God, man cannot, should not live a moment without prayer.

(Young India, 15-12-27)

There are many, who whether from mental laziness or from having fallen into a bad habit, believe that God is and will help us unasked. Why, then, is it necessary to recite His name? It is true, that if God is, He is irrespective of our belief. But realization of God is indefinitely more than mere belief that can come only by constant practice. This is true of all sciences. How much more is true of the science of all sciences?

(Harijan, 28-4-'46)

Prayer is the key of the morning and the bolt of the evening.

(Young India, 25-1-'50)

I am giving you a bit of my experiences and that of my companions when I say that he who had experienced the magic of prayer may do without food for days together, but not a single moment without prayer. For without prayer there is no inward peace.

(Young India, 23-1-30)

I agree that, if a man could practise the presence of God all the twenty-four hours, there would be no need for a separate time for prayer. But, most people

find this impossible. The sordid every day world is too much with them. For them, the practice of complete withdrawal of the mind from all outward things, even though it might be only for few minutes every day, will be found to be of infinite use. Silent communion will help them to experience and undisturbed peace in the midst of turmoil to curb anger and cultivate patience.

(*Harijan*, 28-4-'46)

It should be the general rule that prayers must not be delayed for anybody on earth. God's time never stops. From the very beginning the wheel of his time has gone ceaselessly on. As a matter of fact there is no beginning for Him or His time... How can you anyone afford to miss the time of offering prayers to Him whose watch never stops.

(*Harijan*, 5-5-'46)

In the first *sloka* of *Ishoupanishad* that is repeated everyday at the beginning the prayer, one is asked to dedicate everything to God and then use it to the required extent. The essential condition laid down is that one must not covet what belongs to another. These two maxims contain the quintessence of the Hindu religion.

(*Harijan*, 28-4-'46)

Essence of Prayer

In another *sloka* which is recited during the morning prayer it is said. I do not ask for temporal power, nor do I ask to go to Heaven nor even to attain Nirvana. What I ask for is that I may be able to relieve the pain of those who are in pain". The pain might be physical, mental or spiritual. Pain due to slavery to one's passion is sometimes greater even than the physical.

But God does not come down in person to relieve suffering. He works through human agency. Therefore, prayer to God to enable one to relieve the suffering of others must mean a longing for and a readiness on one's part to labour for it.

"The prayer... is not exclusive. It is not restricted to one's own Caste or Community. It is all inclusive. It comprehends the whole humanity. Its realization would thus mean the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth.

(*Harijan*, 28-4-40)

He can truly pray who has the conviction that God is within him. He who was not, need not pray, God will not be offended but I can say from experience that he who does not pray is certainly a loser.

What matters, then, whether one man worships, God as Person and another as Force? Both do right according to their lights. None knows and perhaps never will know what is the absolutely proper way to pray. The ideal must always remain the ideal. One need only to remember that God is the Force among all the forces. All other forces are material. But God is the vital force or spirit which is all pervading and therefore, beyond human ken.

(*Harijan*, 18-4-46)

Prayer is for remembering God, and for purifying the heart, and can be offered even when observing silence.

(Harijan, 20-4-47)

Power of Prayer

Not until we have reduced ourselves to nothingness can we conquer the evil in us. God demands nothing less than complete self-surrender as the price for the only real freedom that is worth having. And when a man thus loses himself, he immediately finds himself in the service of all that lives. It becomes his delight and his recreation. He is a new, never weary of spending himself in the service of God's creation.

(Young India, 20-12-'28)

Prayer is not an old woman's idle amusement. Properly understood and applied, it is the most potent instrument of action.

(Harijan, 14-4-46)

When the mind is completely filled with His spirit, one cannot harbour ill will or hatred towards any one and reciprocally the enemy will shed his enmity and become a friend. It is not my claim that I have succeeded in converting enemies into friends, but innumerable cases it has been my experience that when the mind is filled with His Peace, all hatred ceases. An unbroken succession of world teachers since the beginning of time have borne testimony to the same. I claim no merit for it. I know it is entirely due to God's grace.

(Harijan, 28-4-46)

He who hungers for the awakening of the Divine in him must fall back on prayers.... But it is not a repatriation of an empty formula... It is better in prayers to have a heart without words than words without heart. It must be in clear response to the spirit which hungers for it. And even as a hungry man relishes a hearty meal, a hungry soul will relish a heart felt prayer.

Our prayer is a heart search. It is a reminder to ourselves that we are helpless without his support. No effort is complete without prayer, without a definite recognition that the best human endeavour is of no effect, if it has not God's blessings behind it. Prayer is a call to humility. It is a call to self-purification.

(Harijan, 8-6-35)

Patience - Necessary for Success

Real prayer is an absolute shield and protection against evils. Success does not always attend the very first effort at such a living prayer. We have to strive against ourselves, we have to believe inspite of ourselves, because months are as our years. We have, therefore, to cultivate limitless patience if we have to realize the efficacy of prayer. There will be darkness, disappointment and even worse: but we must have courage enough to battle against all these and not succumb to cowardice.

(Young India, 20-12-28)

A person must shed all spiritual bias at prayer time. As he is ashamed of doing any thing immoral while other people are looking on, so should be in the presence of God. But God knows our every act and every thought. There is not a single moment when we think any thought or do any act unknown to him. He who thus prays from the bottom of his heart will in time be filled with the spirit of God and become sunless.

(The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. 1.17.7'32)

A prayer can be offered in connection with some person or thing may even be granted. But, if it is offered without any specific end in view, it will confer a greater benefit on the world as well as ourselves. Prayer exerts an influence over ourselves, our soul becomes more vigilant, and the greater its vigilance, the wider the sphere of its influence. Prayer is a function of the heart. We speak aloud in order to wake it up. The power that pervades the universe is also present in the human heart. The body does not offer any obstruction. The obstruction is something of our own making and removed by prayer. We can never know if a prayer has or has not yielded the desired result . . . Prayer is never fruitless, but we cannot know the fruit of it. Nor should it be imagined that it is a good thing, if it yields the desired result. We may pray for someone's salvation but should not worry whether he gets or does not get what we want for him. Even if the result is first opposite of what we had asked for, that is no reason for the conclusion that the prayer has been fruitless.

(The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p.233, 1932)

We may miss things in life but not prayer which implies our co-operation with one another. Prayer should be for purification of the spirit of man. Physical health suffers if we do not wash our bodies; Similarly the spirit become unclean if the heart is not washed with prayer. Please therefore never be negligent in prayer.

(Selected Letter I. 31-12.'26)

The following is the extract from Mahatma Gandhi - The Last Phase Vol. I, Book I by Phylarelal (Page 59).

'Another visitor, a veteran nationalist leader from South India who came to Gandhiji about the same time, in the course of a discussion with him on God and efficacy of prayer asked, "if you pray to God, can he intervene and set aside the law for your sake?"

Gandhiji, "God's law remains unaltered. Since that law says that every action has a result, if a person prays, his prayer is bound to produce an enforceable result in terms of His law".

"But do you know the God to whom you pray?".

"No. I don't".

"To whom shall we pray then?".

"To God whom we do not know, We do not always know the person to whom we pray".

"May be, but the person to whom we pray is knowable".

"So is God; and since He is knowable we search. It may take a billion years before we find him. What does it matter? So I say, even if you do not believe, you must continue to pray i.e. search. "Help thou my unbelief", is a verse from the Bible to be remembered. But it is not right to ask questions. You must have Infinite patience, and inward longing. Inward longing removes all such questions: "Have faith and you will be whole" is another up from the Bible".

"When I look at nature around me" the venerable visitor finally said, I say to myself, there must be one creator, one God, and to Him I should pray".

"That again is reasoning", Gandhiji replied.

"God is beyond reason. But, I have nothing to say, if your reason is enough to sustain you".

The following is an extract from Mahatma Gandhi. The last Phase, Vol. I Book Two by Pyarelal (page 65).

Gandhiji was a man of faith and prayer. They were his instruments of action, tools in his search for truth. 'Life is a very complex thing', he once observed 'and truth and nonviolence present problems which often deny analysis and judgement. One discovers truth and the method of applying it. i.e. Satyagraha or soul force, by patient endeavour and silent prayer".

(*Young India*, June 1, 1921)

"The highest state is above the *imperfect* office of prayer and praise". In it all feelings of quality and separate existence are abolished. A person who has attained that state becomes a vehicle of the moral law that governs the universe - incapable of an evil thought or wishing harm to any one. Whatever is not in consonance with that law will not come to him. Love will be 'an unerring light, and joy its own security'. Prayer is a means for the attainment of that state.

The highest prayer consists in passive contemplation of the immanent, timeless, formless essence. But, all the ancients and even moderns have borne testimony that psychologically, it is all our impossible for the human being to practice contemplation without preparing for it by some kind of adoration and without feeling the need to revert at more or less frequent intervals to intercession and some form atleast of petition".

(Aldous Huxley, *The Perennial Philosophy*, London 1946, page 25).

Petitioning in this context can only be for purity and strength to persevere so that one may have no desire left "except to will what God will for us" (St. Francis de Sales quoted in Aldous Huxley's *The Perennial Philosophy* London, 1946, p.253) and intercession "the means to and the expression of love of one's

neighbour (Aldous Huxley, as *The Perennial Philosophy* in the same was as adoration is "the means to, and the expression of, the love of God - a love that finds its consummation in the unitive knowledge of Godhead which is the fruit of contemplation". (Ibid).

The Divine mind is unchangeable, but since that Divinity is also in everyone and everything, the meaning of prayer is to strive 'to evoke the Divinity' (*Harijan* 19.8. 1939, p.236) within us (You may, therefore" said Gandhiji "describe it (the prayer) as a continual longing to lose oneself in the Divinity which comprises all". (Ibid)

Even atheists, who deny the existence of God do not deny truth. Gandhiji therefore, came to the conclusion that 'rather than say, God is Truth I should say Truth is God' *Young India*, December 21, 1931. p.428. It matters like whether one processes to be an atheist or conceived God in one form rather than another. If you will not parade God I have no doubt you will parade something else which in the end will prove to be God. In this universe, it therefore all depends upon one's temperament, tradition or intellectual conditioning, said Gandhiji. One man may worship God as person, another as Force, and still another as Truth or the Law, it makes no difference. One need only remember that God is the force among all the forces. All other forces are material. But God is the vital force or spirit which shall pervading, all embracing and therefore beyond human ken.

(*Harijan*, 18.8.1946, p.267)

"But, why pray at all?" the sceptic may ask, "Does God stand in need of prayer to enable Him to do His duty?"

"No", replies Gandhiji' God needs no reminder but man does prayer means "an earnest desire to be filled with the spirit of Truth. This desire should present all the twenty four hours. But, ours souls are too dull to have this awareness day and night. Therefore, we offer prayer for a short time will come when all our conduct will be continuously sustained prayer" (Gandhiji, *Ashram Observances in Action*, Allahabad, 1955, p.17 Prayer is a "heart search... a call to humility... a call to self purification" *Harijan*, 1..6.1995, p.132). "If you would swim on the bosom of the Ocean of Truth, you must reduce yourself to zero".

(*Young India*, 31.12.1931, p.478)

God certainly is irrespective of our being. But realization of God is infinitely more than mere relief. Man often repeats the name of God parrot wise. The true seeker must have the living faith which will not only dispel the untruly of parrot wise repetition from within him but also from the hearts of others (*Harijan* 5.5.1915, p.113). This can only come by constant practice. "This is true of all science, how much more true then of the science of all sciences" (Ibid). Hence the need for prayer and meditation.

Meditation consists in 'closing the eyes and ears of the mind of all else, except the object of one's devotion' (*Harijan* 18-8-'36). Therefore, said Gandhiji, man in praying may be said to worship 'his own glorified self', (Ibid) the divine essence, the true that is within ourselves, within the soul of every being "At prayer time,

our speech, is addressed to ourselves and is intended to shake of our proper, Some of us are intellectually aware of God... None has seen Him face to face. We desire to realize Him, to become one with Him... through prayer".

(Gandhiji, *Ashram Observances in Action*, Ahmedabad 1955, p.36).

Prayer thus admits of a naturalistic interpretation. It achieves its results not through any extra mundane intervention but by natural psychological progresses. It is not asking in the ordinary sense of the term but an 'intense longing to become merely a lump of clay in the Potter's divine hand (Young India, 17.11.21, p.37) to surrender one's will, intellect and physical being to the power of Truth of Godhead within'. A man is but the product of his thoughts; what he thinks he becomes".

(Gandhiji, *Ethical Religion*, Madras 1992, p.62).

The fruit of prayer in the opinion of Gandhiji should be looked for not in any "extraneous evidence but in the transformed conduct and character of those who have felt the presence of God within". (*Young India*, 11-11-28, pp.40-41) God never appears to you in person but in action" (*Harijan*, 10-12-'28, p.373). "God to be God must rule the heart and transform it. He must express Himself in every smallest act of his votary" (*Young India*, 11-10-1928, p.340). "I have not seen Him, neither have I known him, I have made the word's faith as amounting to experience". (*Autobiography*, Vol. 11, p.62).

And since this testimony is to be found, in the experience of an unbroken line of prophets and sages in all countries and climes, and since that experience can be repeated by anyone who fulfils the conditions laid down for it, fully satisfies the test of scientific testimony. One can dismiss it as a mere "superstition" only at one's cost. "God will not be offended but I can say from experience that he who does not pray is certainly the loser" (*Harijan*, August 18, 1946, p.267). In spite of despair staring me in the face on the political horizon, I have never lost my peace... That peace comes from prayer" (*Young India*, 25-9-'31, p.274) "where there seems to be no helper" and no comfort in the wide world, this name inspires us with strength and puts all despair to flights. The sky may be overcast ... with clouds, but a fervent prayer to him is enough to dispel them" (*Harijan*, 1-6-'35, p.123) "When helpers fall and comforts flee, I experience that help arrives somehow from I know not where".

(*Autobiography*, Vol. I, p.175)

But he is an inexorable searcher of hearts 'He knows us and our hearts better than we do ourselves. He does not take us at our word, for he knows we often do not mean it since knowingly "and other unknowingly" (*Young India*, March 5, 1925, p.81) and so he does not answer, "in every detail every request of ours" (*Harijan* March 23, 1940, p.55). He never 'answers the prayers of the arrogant' nor the prayers of those who bargain with him... If you would ask him to help you, you would go to him in all your nakedness approach Him without reservation, also without fear or doubts as to how. He can help a fallen being like you... and you will find that every one of your prayers will be answered. I am telling this out of my personal experience I have gone through the purgatory" (*Young India*, 4-4-28, p.111). But he comes to our rescues not on our terms but on his terms.

He tests us through and through "He is the most exacting personage in the world and world to come. He meets out the same measure to us that we meet out to our neighbours men and brutes".

(*Young India*, March 5, 1925, p.8)

Does he then break his law when he answers our prayer.

"No", said Gandhiji, "The question arises only when he conceives God in human terms. I do not regard God as a person. Truth for me is God, and God's law and God are not different things or facts, in the sense that earthly king and his law are different. Because God is an idea, law himself; it is impossible to conceive God as breaking the Law" (*Harijan*, March 23, 1930, p.55) When we describe him as a person 'we are simply using human language and we try to limit him otherwise. He and his law abide everywhere and govern every thing".

(*Ibid*).

That raises the issue of free will and determination Gandhiji admits that "the free will we enjoy is less than that of a passenger on a crowded deck (*Ibid*) "Our past enmeshes us. But that need not lead one to fatalism, "Man is the maker of his own destiny in the sense that he has the freedom of choice as to the manner in which he uses his freedom. But he is a controller of results". (*Ibid*) Action and its fruits like everything else on the phenomenal plane are governed by the law of causality, not the soul which its eternal and unchangeable not being part of nature.

"The sum of all that is Good", said Gandhiji. But for that very reason he cannot be defined or can be defined in contradictory terms only, and ultimately in negatives. "Not this" Not this". This is no indication only of His myriad-sidelines and of the limitations of speech in describing what is beyond the reach of words and even thought in his loving deltaic all contradictions are resolved and reconciled in one grand unity of harmony "On earth the broken arcs in heaven a perfect round" To sum up;

"To me God is Truth and Love; God is ethics and morality; God is fearlessness, God is the source of Light and life and yet. He is above and beyond all these God is conscience. He is even the theism of the atheist... He transcends speech and reason. He is personal God to those who need his personal presence. He is the purest essence. He simply is to those who need faith. He is all things to all men. He is in us and yet above and beyond us. He is long suffering. He is patient but he is also terrible... With him ignorance is no excuse. He is ever forgiving for He always gives us the chance to repent. He is the greatest democrat the world knows, for he leaves us "unfettered" to make our own choice between evil and good. He is the greatest tyrant ever known for He often dashes the cup from our lips and under cover of free will leaves us a margin so wholly inadequate as to provide only mirth for Himself-Therefore Hinduism calls it all His spirilia".

(*Young India*, March 5, 1925, p.81)

Faith transcends reason. Full faith does not feel even the want of experience, affirmed Gandhiji. Need that detract from the validity or value of faith? Does not

even a physicist or a mathematician make use of numbers that cannot be expressed in rational terms but only in symbol" Are "irrational numbers" any the less real on that account? They are indigestible tools in all physical and mathematical research Even so is faith an essential instrument in special researches.

But, what about those who lack faith and, therefore cannot pray? Gandhiji was asked. He replied: "Be humble you are not going to know the meaning of God or prayer unless you reduce yourself to a cipher" (*Harijan*, August 19, 1939, p.238) And the way to reduce oneself to a cipher, he said, is to lose oneself in the service of he least in His creation.

Congregational Prayer

The foregoing is an outline of the "Science of Prayer" as propounded by Gandhiji. But, he was not satisfied with pure science It had to be related to social problems and to provide to solution to them. The technique he used for it was that of congregational prayer. The increasing studies of the 'field' in physics, biology and individual psychology, observes Gerald Heart is tending to show more and more that the 'individualistic or atomistic approach' to the question of prayer is partial and needs to be supplemented'. Human ecology is becoming a popular and important word. A religious congregation is certainly a unit in which that ecology needs to be studied". Hence the importance of "inquiring into and experimenting with the important and almost neglected problem of group psychology as a practical issue of worship and congregationalis certainly a unit in which that ecology needs to be studied". Hence the importance of 'inquiring into and experimenting with the important and almost neglected problem of group psychology as a practical issue of worship and congregational unity. For that we need the study....of the relationships of members and quality, of intensity and mass. (*Aldous Huxely, The Perernnial Philosophy*, London, 1946, p.216).

"Congregational prayer" said Gandhiji, "is a means of establishing the essential human unity through common worship" (*Harijan*, March 3, 1946, p.26). It became an internal part of his technique, of non-violent mass action. Since congregation consists of individuals it goes without saying that congregational worship can have no meanings for one who has never prayed by himself. But at the same time, individual prayer must be a lame affair if it does not result in a yearning for realizing unity with the mass through congregational worship. Success would ultimately depend on the purity of the leader and the faith of the audience "I know instances in which the audience has faith and the leader was an imposter. Such cases will continue to happen. But truth like the sun shines in the midst of the darkness of untruth".

(*Harijan*, July 21, 1945 P.229)

The question before Gandhiji in Noakhali was to build up a new basis of life for those whose morale had been shattered and to provide an antidote for the factionatism and religious bigotry which were at the root of the disturbances. Congregational public prayer of a cosmopolitan character, in which all could form, was in itself an education. Gandhiji used it to inculcate bravery, which comes from a living faith in God upon the criticisms, and the lesson of tolerance, just dealing and brotherhood upon the perpetrators of the outrages.

He spoke to them of the sum of truth "which is far more potent and enduring than its physical prototype that gladdens and gives life to the earth from day". Truth required no embellishment. Nor did it admit of any belittling or magnifying. That were more future even than the pranks of children. "Who gloat over their apparent success in hiding the sun when they cover their acts, be it ever so small, shall never repent it will certainly bear fruit in its own time which, however long it may seem, is still the shortest in comparison. Those who have that living faith never fear anything or any body. Their truth is their defence and armout, their faith, their impregnable shield".

Gandhiji's prayer service included verses from Hindu, Muslim, Parsi, Christian and Buddhist scriptures. They had been included in the Ashram prayers at the suggestion of the respective votaries of those religious themselves. God is one and it makes no difference to Him by what name men call Him. In the prayer meeting of the 7th December, Gandhiji commanded to his congregation a writing by a Muslim in which the writer had rightly contended that man of God is never afraid to die or lose his possessions for the sake of his self respect of religion. "God who has given us life, has a right to take it away". The preaching was universal and applied to all, Hindus as well as Muslims. Those who had in God their sole refuge cast out all fear. Lasting peace and friendship would come only when the communities refused to surrender to any fear save the hold fear of God.

On yet another occasion he selected passages out of a book of the saying of Prophet Mohammed, by Abdulla Suhrawards, the Bengal Chief Minister's father, to be read out to the gathering. "Action will be judged according to intention. No man is a true believer unless he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself". "If a man lived according to this precept, commented Gandhiji, there would be an end to all quarrels and we shall be able to live as good neighbours in spite of differences of opinion and religious faith".

At the prayer meeting of all religions of the 10th December, Gandhiji again pointed out the fundamental unity of all religious themes in his address. In every religion he remarked, there is a common fund of spiritual experience, which applies to men all over the world, whatever difference, strikes the eye is the result of special requirement, is limited to particular situations in time and place. "Indeed there are as many religions as men on earth: for the needs of no two men are wholly like. Nevertheless, the underlying oneness of all religions is not a thing that can be missed. A tree has a single stem but many branches and innumerable leaves. No two leaves are wholly alike. It is the same with religion.

No religion as it existed in the present day world, he continued, was entirely free from blemish. Islam gave to the world some of the noblest characters in history but unwanted accretions had gathered in the practices of Muslims which ran counter to the fundamental teachings to Islam. Similarly, Christian nations professed to follow the Master who taught mankind to love even their enemies. But, they were responsible for two major wars in a single generation. Hinduism which was based on the doctrine of the oneness of all creations had allowed a diabolical wrong to be perpetrated on the so called untouchables, in the name of religion. If the Hindus and Muslims of India but lived up to the tenets of their

respective faiths and cast out the fear of loss of possessions and life from their hearts, the face of India would be changed in no time. The reformed social relationship, he again emphasized, must be based upon character built on the rock of fearlessness. There was no other way to engender mutual trust.

The prayer meeting on the 17th December, was held in front of a devastated homestead. To them, of Gandhiji's address was that the everyday acts of an individual must be informed by truth and nonviolence, if these were to be evidenced in big things. He asked his bearers to dismiss the idea that what one man could do was not possible for everyone else, if a persistent attempt was made. But, in all such things, it was simple wisdom to remember that it was for man to make the attempt and it was God's grace alone which could bless it which success.

On another occasion, he pointed out that true bravery is not a thing that can be cultivated by imitation or by mechanically following a set formula, but by performing one's own dharma or duty; in other words by listening to and doing what appeals to one's conscience. But, how is one to know whether what one fancies to be the voice of one's conscience is not the voice of Satan? The criterion, said Gandhiji, is that it must conform, to the message of the learned and the practice of the good, who have attained complete freedom from hatred and attachment. Even then one should not do a thing, unless it appeals to one's heart as well as intellect.

Gandhiji once defined nonviolence as "uttermost purification", purification within and purification without. The chief duty of a servant of the villagers, he told a gathering of workers who were engaged in rehabilitation work in Noakhali, was purification. When the British first established themselves in India, their idea was to build cities to which all the rich would gravitated and help them in exploiting the country. These cities were made partially beautiful to provide all kind of amenities to the privileged sect, while the millions in the villages were left rotting in helpless ignorance, clean drinking water was no where available, the roads were in disgraceful conditions, the water ways were choked up, education of the villagers was neglected, their minds were steeped in darkness. Every village had more than its share of preventable diseases of all kinds. There were sharks in plenty in every village who took the opportunity to prey upon the village folk. The purification of this dreadful disease of mind and body was a task to which workers should address themselves. India was not lacking in manpower; What was needed was collective effort rightly directed. Bad men would not then find the environment in which they could thrive. Harmonious relations would be restored among people when poverty and ignorance had disappeared through their cooperative efforts. It was with that object that he had come to Noakhali and he did not mind laying down his life for it.

In this way, he chose day after day homely little themes related to the everyday experience of common folk to illustrate deep spiritual truths and the power of non-violence, of love. In the eyes of superficial observers, this sometimes gave to his prayer discourses the appearance of an ensemble in which the big and small, insignificant looking trifles and epoch making decisions on the burning questions of the day jostled with one another. But, in his eyes that distinction

between the big and the small did not exist. In chemistry, if a substance is water, every molecule must confirm to the formula H_2O or else it is not water. Similarly, in Satyagraha every action of a Satyagrahi, whether it relates to his private or his public conduct, must ring true. Truth or Godliness must show through every act of his, however small. Conversely argued Gandhiji, if one aspires to harness the power of Satyagraha or soul force, one must seek it, like a prospector of fissionable material in infinitesimal. He was no impossible Mahatma, he maintained; his life was made up of a number of things which were by themselves common place and which even an ordinary individual could practice. Therefore, what he achieved everybody else could, and the practise of mass non-violence the only effective answer to the challenge of unbridled brute force, was a present possibility.

Congregational Prayer

A congregational prayer is a mighty thing. What we do not often do alone, we do together.. It is a common expression for men who have not robust faith, to seek the comfort of congregational prayer. All who flock to churches, temples and mosques are not scoffers or humbugs. They are honest men and women. For them congregational prayer is like a daily bath, a necessity of their existence. These places of worship are not mere idle superstition to be swept away at the first opportunity. They have survived all attacks up to now and are likely to persist to the end of time.

(Young India, Sept. 23, '26)

It (congregational prayer) brings us all together with God. It is a real purifying bath. Just as the body becomes dirty without a bath, so also the pure soul appears impure unless the heart is washed with the water of prayer. Therefore never miss prayers.

(To Ashram Sisters, p.5).

Human Unity through Common Worship

There is a time for laughing and shouting and a time for observing silence and being serious. Laughter becomes an offence against decorum if it is out of season. Similarly, shouting out of season is an exhibition of bad manners. It becomes a man's duty to remember his Maker all the twenty four hours. If that cannot be done, we should at least congregate at prayer time to renew our covenant with God. Whether we are Hindus or Mussalmans or Parsis, Christians or Sikhs, we all worship the same God. Congregational prayer is a means for establishing the essential human unity through common worship, Mass singing of *Ramdhun* and the beating of *tal* are its outward expressions. If they are not a mechanical performance but are an echo of the inner unison, as they should be, they generate a power and an atmosphere of sweetness and fragrance which have to be realized.

(Harijan, March 3, 1946)

True culture requires that there should be perfect peace in the prayer ground at the time of prayer. We go to the temples to worship not the stone or the metal image but God who resides in it. The image becomes what man makes of

it. It has no power independent of the sanctity with which it is invested by the worshipper. Therefore everyone including children, should observe perfect silence at the time of prayer.

(*Harijan*, April 28, 1946)

Singing of Ramdhun

The singing of Ramdhun is the most important part of Congregational prayer. The millions that find it difficult to correctly recite and understand the Gita verses and the Arabic and Zind Avesta prayers, but everyday can join in chanting Ramanama or God's name. It is as simple as it is effective. Only it must proceed from the heart. In its simplicity lies its greatness and the secret of its universality. Anything that millions can do together becomes charged with a unique power..... I am here to test when it is sung in time to the accompaniment of trail, the triple accord of the voice the accompaniment and that creates an atmosphere of ineffable sweetness and strength which no words can describe.

(*Harijan*, April 7, 1949)

Here is an excerpt from Swami Sivananda's Japa Yoga on Gandhiji's belief in *Ramanama*

(p.14).

"Just hear the glory of *Ramayana* 'you must learn to take the Name of Rama with full devotion and faith. When you study the *Ramayana* of Tulsidas you will learn how great the Divine Power of that blessed Name is.

Gandhiji writes 'you might ask me why I tell you to use the word Rama not one of the many other Names of the creator. True: His Names are as many as and more than the leaves of a tree, and I might, for instance, ask you to use the word God. But, what meaning, What associations would it have for here? In order to enable you to feel anything, when repeating the word God, I should have to teach you some English. I should have to explain to you foreign people's thoughts and associations.

"But, in telling you to repeat the Name of *Rama* I am giving you a name worshipped since countless since generations by the people of this land, a Name familiar to the very animals and birds. The very trees and stones of Hindustan, through many thousand years. You will learn from *Ramayana*, how a stone by the roadside sprang of life at the touch of Rama's foot as he passed by, you must learn to repeat the blessed Name of Rama sweetness and such devotion that the birds will pause in their singing to listen to you that the very trees will bend their leaves towards you, stirred by the divine malady of that Name".

Gandhiji's devotion to *Rama* was remarkable. Though he remarked that his Rama was not historical Rama still whenever he thinks about and talks of *Rama*, he goes even above. *Tulsidas* and other saints in his devotion as seen in the passage.

The following passages are again quoted from his letters which will further give us glimpses of Gandhiji and his spiritual and religious life.

"Devotion to duty is itself prayer. We go and pray in order to be qualified for doing actual service. But when one is engaged in actual practice of duty, prayer is merged with the execution of duty. If someone, who is engaged in deeper prayer, hears the cry of another, who is stung by a scorpion, she is bound to leave the prayer and run to help him. Prayer finds fulfilment in the service of the distressed.

(Bapu's Letters to Ashram Sisters, p.79, 2-9-1929)

And now here is the first verse of the morning prayer.

"Early in the morning, I call to my mind that Being which is felt in the heart, which is Sat (the eternal, Chit, knowledge, Sukham, (bliss). Which is the state reached by perfect men, and which is the super state. I am that immaculate Brahma, whichever notes the states of dream, wakefulness and deep sleep not this body the compound made of the elements earth, water, space, light and air!") you will be interested to know that the first verse was commenced on the 6th last.

I am sorry that the very first verse needed correcting. The more I think the more clearly I see the morning. And then I do no mind how often. I cut about the translation. Formerly, I used to shudder to utter this verse thinking that the claim made therein was arrogant. But when I saw the meaning more clearly I perceived at once that it was the very best thought with which to commence the day. It is a solemn declaration that we are not the changeful bodies which require sleep etc., but deep down we are the being, witness pervading the countless bodies. The first part is the recalling to mind the presence of the vital principle, and the second part is the affirmation that we are that vital principle. The description of the Being the Brahma is also quite opposite. It is nothing else is (sat), it is all knowledge or light (chit) and naturally therefore, it is all bliss (sukham) of the world generally used in Ananda (Bapu's Letters to Mira, P.143, 20-12-1930).

In the early morning I worship Him who is beyond the reach of thought and speech is possible I worship him, whom the vedas describe as neti, (not this not his). Him they (the sages) have called god of gods the unborn, the untallen, the source of all".

(Bapu's Letters to Mira, P.145, 30-12-1930)

"May the Goddess Saraswathi (of learning), the Destroyer completely of black ignorance protect me, she who is while as the mogra flower the moon and a garland of show who has worn white robes whose hands are adorned with the beautiful bamboo of he veena (a kind of Violin). Who is seated a white lotus and who is always adored by Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and other Gods".

To me the thought here is very beautiful Learning of course means wisdom. The emphasis on threefold whiteness-that of snow moon, flower and the white

dress and white seat is intended to show the uttermost purity is indispensable part of wisdom or learning. As you explore the deeper meaning of these and kindred verses, you will find every virtue personified and made a living reality instead of a dread dictionary word. These imaginary gods are more real than the so called real things we perceive with our five senses. When I recite this verse, for instance I never think that I am addressing an imaginary picture. The sensation is a mystical act. That when I analyse the act intellectually I know that the goodness is an imaginary being does not in any way affect the value of this recitation at prayer time.

(Bapu's Letters to Mira, P.52, 14-1-1931)

"Guru (teacher is *Brahma*, he is *Vishnu*, he is *Mahadev*, he is the great *Brahman* itself. I how to that "Guru".

This refers of course to the spiritual teacher. This is not a mechanical or artificial relationship. The teacher is not all this in reality. But he is all that to the disciple who finds his full satisfaction in Him and signifies perfection to him, who gave him a living faith in a loving god. Such a guru is a rarity at least now a days. The best thing therefore, is to think of God himself as one's guru.

(Bapu's Letters to Mira, P.153, 25-1-1931)

There is only one prayer that we may offer: "They will be done". Some one will ask where is the sense of offering. Such prayer the answer is "Prayer should not be understood in a gross sense. We are aware of the presence of God in our heart, and in order to shake of attachment, we for the moment think of God as different from ourselves and pray to Him. That is to say, we do not wish to go where our wayward will may lead us but where the Lord takes us. We do not know whether it is good to live or to die. Therefore, we should not delight in living nor should we tremble at the thought of the death. We should be equiminded towards both. This is the ideal. It may be long before we reach it, and only a few of us can attain it. Even then we must keep it constantly in view, and more difficult it seems of attainment, the greater should be the efforts we put forth.

The Diary of Mahadev Desai Vol. I, pp.118-19, (19-5-1932)

I do not forbid of the images in prayer. I only prefer the worship of the formless. This preference is perhaps improper. One thing suits one man; another thing will suit another man; and comparison can be fairly made between the two. You are not to fight about Shankara and Ramanuja. Spiritual experience has greater influence than environment. The seeker of truth should not be affected by his surroundings but rise above them. Views based on the environment are often found to be wrong. For instance take the case of body, we cannot at once realize her as distinct from her physical gesture. Therefore it was a very great man indeed who rose above his environment and said "It (the soul) is not this (the body)". The language of saints like Tukaram should not be taken in literal sense. I suggest that you read his abhang Kela maticha pashupai (The image of God is made of clay) etc. The moral is that we must realize the idea which underlines the words of holy men. It is quite possible that they worshipped the formless even while they pictured God in a particular form. This is impossible

for ordinary mortal like ourselves and therefore we would be in a sorry light if we did not penetrate a little deeper in the implication of their statements.

The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, pp.158, 59 (17-6-1932)

Gandhiji thinks "Now I come to the next thing, viz, that prayer is the very core of man's life as it is the most vital part of religion. Prayer either petitional or in its wider sense inward communion. In either case, the ultimate result is the same. Even when it is petitional the petition should be for the cleaning and purification of the soul, for freeing in from layers of ignorance and darkness the envelop it. He therefore who hungers for the awakening of the divine in him must fall back on-prayer. But prayer is no mere exercise of words or of the ears, it is no mere repetition of empty formula. Any amount of repetition of Ramanama is futile if it falls to stir the soul..... if that is the case, someone will say, we should therefore be offering our prayers every minute of our lives. There is no doubt about it, but we earning mortals, who find it difficult to retire within ourselves for inward communion even for a single moment, will find it impossible to remain perpetually in communion with the divine. We therefore for some hours, when we make a serious effort to throw off the attachments of the world for a while; we make a serious endeavour to remain, so to say out of the flesh you have heard Surda's hymns. It is passionate cry of a soul hungering for union with the divine. According to our standards he was a saint, but according to his own he was a proclaimed sinner, Spiritually, he felt his separation from the divine so keenly that he uttered that anguished cry in despair (Who is so corrupt, wicked and in-insiful as).

(Young India, 2-1-30)

There can be no fixed rule laid down as to the time these devotional acts should take place. It depends upon individual temperaments. There are precious moments in one's daily life. The exercises are intended to sabre and humble us and enable us to realize nothing happens without this will and that we are but clay in the hands of the potter. These are all moments when one reviews one's immediate part, confesses one's weakness, asks for forgiveness and strength to and to do better. One minute may be enough for some, twentyfour hour would be too little for others. For these who are filled with the presence of God in them, to labour is to pray. The life is one continuous prayer or act of worship. For those who act only to sin, to indulge themselves and to live for self, not time is too much. If they had patience and the will to be sure they would pray till they feel the definite purifying presence of God within them. For as ordinary mortals these must be middle path between these two extremes. We are not so exalted as to be idle to say that all our acts are a dedication, nor perhaps are we so far gone, as to be living purely for self. Hence have all religions set apart times for general devotion.

(Young India, 10-6-26)

All things in the universe, including the sun and the moon and the stars, obey certain laws. Without the restraining influence of these laws the world would not go on for a single moment. You, whose aim in life is service of your fellowmen, will go to pieces, if you do not impose on ourselves some sort of discipline, and prayer is a necessary spiritual discipline. It is discipline and restraint that

separates us from the truth. If we will be men walking with our heads correct and not walking on all fours, let us understand and put ourselves under voluntary discipline and restraint.

(Young India, 23-1-30)

Prayer in Satyagraha

A satyagrahi, a believer in satyagraha, constantly seeks to live a life of truth and love. He always seeks to "turn the search light inward" and so live that he does no wrong to his fellow men through exploitation, oppression, violence or other means. The satyagrahi looks upon all as his brothers. He believes that the practice of love and self suffering will bring about a change of heart in his opponent. The satyagrahi tries to change both individuals and institutions. He believes that the power of love, if pure, is great enough to melt the stoniest heart of an evil doer.

A satyagrahi, since he lives for other's needs, has great moral strength. This will come only through prayer. The discipline which is necessary for the kind of life he leads is possible only if he dedicates himself to the service of God through prayer. He must cleanse his heart through prayer and the communion thus brought through prayer with the Almighty i.e.. The one that resides in himself, will make him see and feel that he is nothing different from his fellow creatures. Just as fasting is a method to purify one's physical impurity, soulful prayer purifies the heart and lifts the veil that shrouds the soul. That is why Gandhiji made a rule that the participants in the campaign should seek to purify themselves through such ways as prayer, meditation, fasting and remaining in their own homes for a day before the campaign beings. They pledge themselves to serve only truth and nonviolence and to resist all evil and violence only with truth and love with satyagraha. This is possible only by the grace of God, which comes through prayer.

"And so we come to the rock bottom foundation of satyagraha, prayer. A Satyagrahi relies upon God for protection against tyranny or brut force. "Prayer is the first and last lesson in learning the noble and brave art of sacrificing self in the various walks of life. Prayer is not old woman's idle amusement. Properly understood and applied, it is the most potent instrument of action.

(Harijan, April 14, p.80)

Prayer, undoubtedly, requires a living faith in God, Successful Satyagraha is inconceivable without that faith. "God may be called by any other name so long it connotes the living Law of life-in otherwords, the Law and the Law-giver rolled into one". *(Ibid)* Without it a Satyagrahi will not have the courage to die without anger, without fear and without retaliation. 'Such courage come from the belief that God sits in the hearts of all and that there should be no fear in the knowledge of the omnipresence of opponents"-*(Harijan, June 18, P.152)* When passions run high and fame and mass hysteria lay hold of the people, the man of prayer should be able to keep his head above the storm and refuse to sink to the level of brute. "To be able to conquer anger hatred and all other base passions is the fruit of prayer".

(Harijan, May 5, 1946, p.114)

"Mankind would die, if there were no exhibitions anytime and anywhere of the divine in man (*Harijan*, October 20, 1946, p.368).

Let me close the lesson with one hymn dear to Gandhiji.

"Lead kindly light amid the encircling gloom.

Lead thou me on:

Lead thou my feet, I do not ask to see

The distant scene; one step is enough for me.

Cardinal John Henry Newman.

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Exercise

1. Outline the Gandhian vision of Ethical Religion.
2. Explain Gandhian vision of inter-religions prayer
3. Give an outline of inter-religious dialogue.
4. How Gandhi combined religion and spirituality.

Application / Field Work

1. Give your own views an Ethical Religion.
2. Participate and also conduct inter-religions prayer.
3. What are the steps to be taken in your personal life to move from religion to spirituality.
4. Encounter three persons who specialize in inter-religions dialogue.
5. Suggest ways to improve and enhance inter-religions understanding.
6. Make creative pieces (may be a poem, a story, a cartoon, etc., ...) for promoting inter-religious values.

**GANDHIAN VISION OF HUMAN,
HUMANISM, RAMARAJYAM & UNIVERSALISM**

Gandhian Vision of Human

Introduction

When we refer to the concept of man, we refer to the whole man not merely to any one aspect of his nature or of his activity. He is a material being, whose body acts on the material environment and is acted upon by it. He is also a living being with an internal purpose or immanent ideology and strives to maintain himself intact in his surroundings. Again, he is a psychological being with a mind of his own, looking backwards into the past and forwards into the future and with an inwardness that is his own. He is a social and ethical being, with emotions and settlements developed in the direction of other men, his personality developing a shape in a social environment. The ethical or moral situation in man leads not only to an intensification of his own inwardness, but also to a recognition of the same inwardness in others. Man as a religious being craves and scorches for cosmic communion with the divine. Above all as a activity and desires communion with the divine. Above all as a rational being, develops the spirit of questioning and reasonings evaluates his thinking and acting, wonders if he is mistaking fancies for truths, truth for falsity, right for wrong and good for evil. He is also a spiritual being longing for self-realization or union with God. In conclusion, he is a complex creature, leading an inward and outward life and craving stable support both ways, and aiming high and striving for progress and perfection in this life itself. A philosophy of life for so complex a being as man cannot be mere epistemology, science, biology, psychology, sociology, ethics or religion. It has to include all these and transcend them all. Further male and white race / upper caste centred approach has to be discarded and a more and all inclusive approach is needed.

CONCEPTION OF MAN ACCORDING TO VEDANTA

MAN : A BLEND OF ANIMAL AND DIVINE

The Divine Principle in Man

– Swami Abhedananda

"The study of human nature is the most interesting sublime and of the most beneficial of all studies. The more we study ourselves, the better we can understand the universe, its laws, and the truth that underlies its phenomena. It is said, "man is the epitome of the universe whatever exists in the world is to be found in the body of man. That is man is the microcosm of the macrocosm. On the one hand man is filled with the tendencies and propensities, which characterize the lower animals. But on the other hand, we see him manifesting through the actions of his life all those noble qualities that adorn the character of one, whom, we

honour, respect and worship as the divine Being. Human nature seems to be a most wonderful blending of that which is animal with that which is called Divine. It is like the twilight before day break through which the darkness of the night of the animal nature may be called the state of transitions from the animal into the divine; the animal nature includes the love of self or the attachment to one's self of one's body and to everything related to the body and the senses, desire for sense pleasure and enjoyments, clinging to earthly life, fear of death and the struggle for existence. Each of these qualities or tendencies is to be found in the lower animals as well as in human beings, the difference being only in degree and not in kind.

The savage man, who lives like a wild beast in caves or under trees and does not know to build a house or cultivate the land, but who sustains life by depending entirely upon fruits, roots, wild berries or upon the birds and the beasts that he can trap, express in all the sections of his life nothing more than what we have described as animal tendencies and animal propensities. If the Darwinian theory be true then we can easily explain why there should be so little difference between primitive man and his distant, ancestor, the chimpanzee, or some other member of the anthropoid species, When however the same wild man becomes partially civilized by learning to cultivate the land, to raise food and cook it, to build houses and live in communities, he no longer manifests these animal tendencies in their simple and more savage forms. He gradually adopts more artful methods to accomplish his purposes. For instance, the struggle for existence depends chiefly upon physical force among savage tribes as well as among animals, while among civilized people in civilized countries a similar result in the form of the survival of the fittest is obtained, not by the display of brute force, but by art, skill diplomacy, policy, lying, strategy, and hypocrisy. These are the offensive and defensive weapons of the so called civilized man.

"All the vicious qualities and wicked deeds, such as murder theft, robbery, and other crimes which are found in civilized communities are nothing but the expressions of the animal tendencies of man working under the heavy pressure of the rigid laws of society, state and government. The project from love of self and extreme attachment to the animal nature. Being guided by these lower tendencies, man becomes extremely selfish, and does not recognize the rights and comforts of his fellow beings. On the contrary, he does everything to satisfy the cravings of his body and senses at the expenses of his neighbours. But, the moment that this savage man or the man who lives like a lower animal beings is to see the rights of others, learns to love and care for his fellowmen, beings in the same way that he loves his own dear self and cares for his belongings, from that time he rises a step higher than the absolutely animal plane: he becomes truly human and gradually manifests the other qualities and tendencies that accompany this fundamental moral principle-to love one's neighbour as one's self.

Upon this foundation has been built the whole structure of ethics among all nations. The virtuous qualities such as disinterested love for humanity, mercy, justice, kindness towards others, forgiveness, self-sacrifice ... all these help the animal man to expand his love of self and to subdue all that proceeds from purely selfish attachment to his own body and senses. The higher we rise above the

animal plane, the wider becomes the circle of self of love and instead of being contained to the body and senses of the individual, it becomes general covering the selves, not merely so dearest relatives and nearest friends, but of neighbours countrymen and at last of all humanity. Thus the more universal our love of self becomes the nearer we approach the Divinity, because the divine principle is the universal Being whose love flows equally towards all living creature, as the sun shines equally upon the heads of the virtuous and wicked.

From Knowledge to Wisdom

"In spite of his rudimentary self knowledge, which gave him control over the animal world, the earliest man remained an animal to appetite and behaviour. A little more of this self-knowledge gained through reflection in the context of social experience, helped to increase his control over himself and to humanize him. This process, ever in operation in human civilization and social political organization, has led up to the man in the modern age, with his almost total global sweep in socio-cultural interests and contacts, and with his yearning for the universal and human. Yet the disparity between his control over himself and his control over external nature, between his moral efficiency and his technical efficiency has so far posed. This is thwarting the realization of his heart's yearning for the universal and human. Neglected and unsolved this problem may make him the only possible destroyer of his civilization and of the fruits of evolution as well.

In the meantime he is destined to move from one tension to another, from one sorrow to another. The only solution lies in the deepening of his moral and spiritual awareness. Biological evolution achieved a measure of this in the life of the earliest man in his rudimentary knowledge of his own self. Social evolution guided by human intelligence, advanced this still further; a physical and organic self separate from all others gave place to a social self morally related to an increasing number of other evolution of man must continue till he rises from self-centredness to self transcendence and from knowledge to wisdom, says Bertrand Russell. (*The Impact of Science on Society* - pp 120-121):

"We are in the middle of a race between human skill as to means and human folly as to ends. Given sufficient folly as to ends, every increase in the skill required to achieve them is to the bad. The human race has survived hitherto owing to ignorance and incompetence: but given knowledge and competence combined with folly-there can be no certainty of survival. Knowledge, but it is power for evil just as much as is for good. It follows that unless men increase in wisdom as in knowledge, increase of knowledge will only increase of sorrow.

The Spiritual Training of the Will

The increase in wisdom is what man achieves when he transcends his little separate self when he moves in the direction of his true self which is also the self of all, the path to this lies through increasing control of the senses and the mind and through discrimination between the real and the unreal, between the changeless one and the changing many. This is the highest education for man according to the *Upanishads*. It is the education for him in what the *Mundaka*

Upanishad (15) terms para vidya, the highest knowledge-wisdom, the relation of the imperishable one in the perishable many.

Man has intelligence and capacity to control the processes of nature and society and to use these to ensure human fulfilment everywhere. But his will is perverse, it seeks the ways of folly; it is his enemy; and it will remain his enemy so long as it is rooted in his animal nature and to the little ego centred in that nature. It has to be turned in the direction of his divine nature within: then alone will his intelligence and will and feeling fuse into new value to emerge as *buddhi*, wisdom.

Anything that is done, not with a motive confined to some particular person, community, or nation, but through love for all humanity may, with a feeling that seeks the benefit of all loving creatures is unselfish; consequently, it is guided by the universal or divine principle. The tendency of the individual self of each man is not to remain confined within one narrow circle, but to go beyond the boundary of the circle of the animal nature, beyond human nature and ultimately to become universal. All charitable acts and philanthropic deeds are but steps towards that one goal. Well has it been said by Ralph Waldo Emerson that, "the life of man is a self-evolving circle which from a ring imperceptibly small rushes on all sides outwards to new and larger circles and that without end".

"The human mind has lost its bearings in the delusion of wealth and power". Continued stagnation means death. So the *Upanishads* gave us their gospel of hope for man through their grand theme. Man shall have wealth; man shall have power, man shall have all this; he shall not yet lost in any of these. These are the means and not the end; he shall break through the crust of experience, and realize the *atman*, his divine self, which is *Sat-cit-Ananda* Existence-knowledge-Bliss-Thus, the *Upanishads* show us the way to create living and life fulfilment.

Indeed the self of man has the constant tendency to break down all limitations to transcend all boundaries, and to become one with the self of the universe. A human being cannot rest contented, can remain perfectly satisfied while living within the limitations of his animal nature. He may appear to be contented for a time or he may delude himself by thinking that he is perfectly happy and satisfied under these condition but the moment is sure to come when, being forced from within, he will give vent to the natural tendency to expand by struggling hard to reach out from the animal self and he united with the universal self. The tendency is inherent in the very nature of man and its expression will force him to control the lower animal distress and propensities, to become the absolute master of him and will gradually had him to live a moral and spiritual life.

Vedanta teaches that when we speak of a man or woman as the image of God; we do not mean his or her physical form but we mean the individual ego or the soul. If the divine Being or God be this universal spirit, then His image cannot be the physical form of man; this does not convey any idea or meaning at all. The ego to the soul of each individual man or woman is the image of Divinity. The idea has been beautifully expressed in Vedanta: In the cave of the heart have entered the two, the one is the external, real, perfect, and self-effulgent like

the sun and the other the individual ego or soul is like its reflection, or shadow or image. The one is like the fountain head of the blessed qualities and the infinite source of all divine power, while the other contains the partial reflection of those qualities and powers.

Thus, according to vedanta, every individual soul, whether it be more or less animal in its thought and actions, possesses the divine image and is no other than the image of the divine principle of Being. The divine Being is one and universal, but its reflections or images are many. As the image of the sun falling upon the dull and unpolished surface of a piece of metal: does not properly reflect the grandeur and power of that self-luminous body but appears dull and imperfect so the divine image falling upon the dull surface of the animal natured, cannot reflect all the blessed qualities, cannot manifest all the divine powers. But, on the contrary, appears animals in its tendencies and propensities. As the same image of the sun will shine forth brighter and effulgent, when the surface of the metallic polished to the individual soul will show it brighter and more effulgent aspect and will more fully reflect the divine qualities, when the heart which contains the image is polished and made free from the dirt of animal desire and animal tendencies; then and then alone this same individual soul will begin to manifest all the blessed qualities like justice, merely kindness, and disinterested love for all humanity. These powers are latent in all individuals, but they will be expressed, when the heart is purified' - Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God", said Jesus of Nazareth.

The perfect manifestation of these divine powers depends entirely upon the removal of all obstructions like desire for early pleasure for the enjoyments and comforts of earthly life, attachment to the gross physical body and to the senses, which force the individual soul to remain on the animal plane. Yet, however animal the expression of nature of an ordinary man of the world may be his soul is still the image of the Divinity, which holds potentially in its bosom all divine powers and all blessed qualities. Nay, even the souls of lower animals are potentially divine, according to *Vedantha*. The evolution of nature as required to bring out these potential tendencies, powers, and qualities into their actual and real manifestation. Climbing the ladder of the evolution of nature, each individual or germ of life express in latent powers first through the limitation, of the animal nature as animal tendencies and animal desires and lastly, as spiritual powers by rising above all limitations, by transcending the boundaries of the various circles of animals, and reaching out to the inflicts divine principle. At that time the individual soul becomes absolutely free from the bondage of nature, enjoy the supreme Bliss which is divine, and manifests all the blessed qualities. In passing through these various stages the individual ego studies its own powers, gains experience and realizes all the powers that are dormant with the soul (Swami Abhedananda).

"The *Upanishads* boldly proclaim that spirituality is the prerogative of every individual. This *atman*, the divine, the immortal, is the self of every man and woman and child, it is the true nature of man, it is also the true nature of all animals, but animals can not realize it, it is only man with his unique psycho physical system, aided by the psycho-social environment created by himself in the

course of his evolution, that has the capacity to realize the truth. Man is specially fitted for this great advantage. He has certain advantages, are when he starts using these adventure he is able to rise to the highest glory of man. The *Upanishads* do condemn man's pursuit of world by wealth and powers thy never condemn only values pursued by man. Only they say, "There is something better and higher than this". The *Upanishads* ever urge us to go on to the realization of his something better within us. Ramakrishna is one of his parables tells the story of a woodcutter who going into forest to cut wood, was told by holy man to go forward. Following this advice, in due course the woodcutter came across first a sandalwood forest, then a silvermine, then a gold mine and going deeper still into the forest, he found at last a diamond mine, and became exceedingly rich - Telling this story of life you may be, you will realize better and purer things if only you go deeper and deeper into yourself".

Universal Man

The *Upanishads* summon man to constant struggle to gain the high, the struggle to achieve the eternal, the permanent, the immortal embedded in life and experience. Other roots and other cultures have spoken of man as a dominator of external nature, as a creator of values in the context of man's collective life. In Greek thought, for example we have the concept of *Promethean* spirit, the power of the human spirit, to overcome external obstructs and establish man's supremacy over that forces, of nature and, if necessary, over the forces of other human beings as well. The great defect in this life when pursued by itself is that it does not carry all humanity together. It is based on the concept of man dominating everything together. It is based on the concept of man dominating everything external to himself, it does not (Abhedhananda) stress the need to charter and overcome the age which results from such domination of his external environment. Man dominating his environment is a valid concept - it is a form of human excellence. The West has carried this to the highest level of expression. But this is not the highest that man is capable of: Indian thought will not accord it the highest point in the scale of human excellence. That point involves the transcendence of the ego and the emergence of the universe within man. When man achieves supreme self-transcendence, finds that there is nobody to dominate. He finds that he is one with all, for he has realized the self in all.

In other words, he discovers himself as the Universal Man, integrated within and without, and himself pulsating in the heart of man and nature. The liberation of this Universal Man out of the common men and women that we are is the aim of the *Upanishads*-Man, who has been completely submerged in nationalistic racial sectarian, or various other forms of limiting millions need to the redeemed.

(Swami Ranganathananda)

Each soul is bound to gain experience after experience in the process of the manifestation of its latent powers and potential energy. Having experienced the powers and actions of the animal nature with their results, the soul longs for higher manifestation, tries to rise above that plane and after realizing the effects of the moral and spiritual nature, it reaches perfection. In this state the soul becomes absolutely happy and contented, and transcending the limitations of sense

powers, self-love and selfishness. It manifests the blessed qualities in the action of its everyday life.

This idea was illustrated by an ancient sage in India thus: "Two birds of the most beautiful plumage dwell upon the truth of life they are bound together by the Tie of the closest friendship. The one sits calm, serene, contented, peaceful like a witness; while the other bird flies and moves from branch to branch, being attracted by the sight of the sweet and inviting fruits, which the tree of life bears. When he is drawn towards a fruit, he tastes it and enjoys the sensation; then he tries another which appear more attractive but unfortunately, when he tastes it, he finds it extremely bitter and does not like it (We must remember here that the tree of the bitterest) Having tired the various fruits according to his desires the bird happens to come one that is exceedingly bitter and having tasted it he suffers intensely, and unhappy and distressed, he remembers his friend, whom he had forgotten for the time being. He looks for him and at last finds him seated on the top of the tree, calm, peaceful and perfectly contented. He envies his peace, happiness, and contentment, and slowly approaches him. As he comes near and nearer, lo! he is forcibly drawn into the perfect being of that witness like friend, for he was his reflection or image".

The bird which flies from branch to branch, when enjoys and suffers is the individual ego or the living soul of man. The fruits of this tree of life are nothing but results of all the good and bad acts which the ego performs, and the witness like friend is the perfect divine Being, whose image the individual soul is. Thus, having experienced all the fruits of our happy and bad deeds, when we become discontented and unhappy, we seek our true eternal friend, admire him, aspire to attain to his peace and happiness, go nearer and nearer and ultimately become one with him, it is then that we feel happy and contented, it is then that true peace and happiness come.

As the image or reflection of the sun cannot exist for a second independent of that self-luminous heavenly body so the individual soul being the image of God cannot exist even for a moment without depending upon the divine principle. The individual ego owes its life, its intelligence, its intellect, mind and all other mental and physical powers to that infinite source of all power, all knowledge, all love, and anything. All these powers and forces that we are expressing in our everlasting happiness. In fact, the individual soul does not possess daily life, whether animal, moral, or spiritual do not belong to us but proceed from that one inexhaustible source. Nor is the divine principle far from us; He is the soul of our soul, the life of our life, and the omnipotent essence of our being.

The divine principle is smaller than the smallest and larger than the largest; it pervades the infinite space and also dwells in the minute atom of atoms; it resides in the innermost sanctuary of the soul of every man and woman whosoever realizes the omnipresent. Divinity whose image the individual soul is, unto him come eternal peace and perpetual bliss, unto none else.

(Swami Abhedhananda)

Gandhiji's Concept of Human

"Gandhiji's views about human nature were bound up indissolubly with his metaphysical assumption and the ethical principles he considered to be fundamentals. Man for him is not a physico chemical aggregation, but a spiritual entity. He was not only concerned with man's being, but also with his becoming.

Gandhiji inherited the ancient Indian tradition, but he did not accept the tradition blindly, what was characteristic of him was that he influenced a new dynamic element into traditional passive attitude of our people by utilizing "the new positive ideas of modern Indians by assimilating them in thought, living them in his life and giving them social and political shape". Prof. Dharendra Mohan Datta correctly observes. "This entire concrete process, and experience gave birth to his own philosophy of man and life".

We have seen in the forgoing passages, man possesses a twofold nature, part angel and part brute Gandhiji also believed: "Every one of us is a mixture of good and evil. Is there not plenty of evil in us. There is enough in me and I always pray to God to purge me of it. The difference that there is between human beings is the different in degree".

Man and Brute

Gandhiji admitted man's animate ancestry. "We are, perhaps all originally brutes. I am prepared to believe that we become men by a slow process of evolution from the brute". (*Harijan* 2.4-38) (P 65) Again, "Man must choose either of the two courses, the upward or the downward but as he has the brute in him, he will more easily choose the downward course than the upward especially, when the downward course is presented to him in a beautiful garb ... the downward instinct is embodied in them (men)... *Harijan* 1-5-85, p.410.

But Gandhiji would not admit that man's nature was all evil. He emphatically asserted "Man's nature is not essentially evil. Brute nature has been known to yield to the influence of love, You must never despair of human nature" (*Harijan* Jan. 5-1-38, p 31-41) And "Human nature will only find itself when it fully realizes that to be human it has to be beastly or brutal. Though we have the human form without the attainment of the virtue of non-violence we still share the qualities of our remote ancestors". (*Harijan*, 8-10-18 p.282).

Gandhiji did not look upon man as a mere brute. He regards man as, above all, the soul. He believed that "the dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law-to the strength of the spirit" (*Young India*, 11-8-20). What distinguishes man from the brute? In his words: We were born with brute strength, but we were born in order to realize God who dwells in us. That indeed is the prestige of man and it distinguishes him from the brute creation". So, like all the seers of the *Upanishads* Gandhiji believed in the ultimate goal of man or human birth i.e. self realization. The essential difference between man and brute according to him, is that the former can respond to the call of the spirit in him, can rise superior to the passions that he owns in common with the brute and, therefore superior to

selfishness and violence which belong to the brute nature and not to the immoral spirit of man. Gandhiji understood this as being the fundamental conception of Hinduism (*Selections from Gandhi*: Nirmal Kumar Bose).

Man and God

Gandhiji as a believer in "absolute oneness of God, and therefore of humanity", affirmed "What though we have many bodies? We have but one soul", "I believe in the essential unity of man and for that matter of all that lives". Gandhiji subscribed to the theological beliefs that, all life in its essence is one, and that the humans are working consciously or unconsciously towards the realization of that identity. "Our existence as embodied beings is purely momentary; What are a hundred years in eternity? But, if we shatter the chains of egotism, and melt into the ocean of humanity we share the dignity. To feel that we are something is to set up a barrier between God and ourselves; to cease feeling that we are something is to be come one with God".

He repeatedly said that it was more natural for man to be good than to be evil, though apparently descent might seem easier than ascent. He believed that divine powers within us are infinite. Because of this divine that in man it was his firm belief that man is by nature going higher. He spoke of men as the part of God or the divine power sometimes again he looked upon every man as an incarnation of God. He was fond of quoting the Mohammedan saying: "Man is not God; but neither is he different from the light (the spark) of God". Dr. D.M. Mehta after noting this fond citation of Gandhi observes "Here again we find his preferment for some type of identity-in difference relation which is differently maintained by the Vaishnava, Vedantists and in recent times by Tagore. The Shankarites are advocates of rigid identity. Gandhiji tried to keep his conception of man and God mobile and dynamic by thinking of God as force as life etc., as if to make him admit divergent lines of a manifestation, intimation and inspiration.

The Oneness of Man

As seen above, Gandhiji believed in the absolute oneness of God and therefore also of humanity. Though we have many bodies we have but one soul. The rays of the sun are many through refraction. But they have the same source". He belief "in the essential unity of God and man and for that matter all that lives", has been stated by one commentator as being similar to the stoic idea of the universe as a divine whole and of humankind as an essential unity in which the individual could realize himself.

Gandhiji subscribed to the theological belief that, all lies in their essence is one, and that the human are working consciously or unconsciously towards the realization of that identity. In a mood of philosophic exhalation he could exclaim, "Our existence as embodied beings is purely momentary. What are a hundred years in eternity? But, if we shatter the charms of egoism and melt into the ocean of humanity, we share its dignity. To feel that we are something is to set up barriers between God and ourselves; to cease feeling that we are something is to become one with God".

About soul he said, 'Soul is apart from life. The latter is conditioned by the body, the former is not'. The soul is Godhead within man; it is self-acting; it persists even after death; its existence does not depend upon the physical body. It is matter rarefied to the utmost limit. Hence, whatever happens to one body must affect the whole of matter and the whole of spirit. He held the belief "that if one man gains spiritually, the whole world gains with him and if one man falls, the whole world falls to that extent".

Man and Environment

Gandhi, while admitting that man actually lived by habit, laid stress on the exercise of will. "While admitting that man actually lives by habit I hold that it is better for him to live by the exercise of the will. (Nirmal kumar, *Studies in Gandhism*, p 66, p 203) Self-direction involved for Gandhiji passing judgements on one's behaviour, justifying or condemning it. He recognized that inspite of the great effort for being detached, no man can altogether undo the effects of his environment or his upbringing. But, he did not consider man to be merely a creature of circumstances". "It is man's privileges to overcome adverse circumstances". One could see from Gandhiji's own life how he had been overcoming all the adverse circumstances coming in the way in his life to emerge a near perfect man he was.

Self-restraint, he believed, was a positive factor in man's life for overcoming the adverse circumstances. As he has said in his autobiography, "The brute by nature knows no self-restraint. Man is man because he is capable of and only in so far as he exercise self-restraint". Self-restraint implies control of the baser tendencies like hatred and selfishness, and informing life with good will and love.

Gandhiji recognized the influence of environment on a man's character and man has the ability to change the environment as well as himself. The rulers, if they are bad, are so, not necessarily or wholly by reason of birth, but largely because of their environment, that I have hopes of their altering by their course. If they are dominated by their environment, they do not surely deserve to be killed, but should be changed by a change of environment. (*Harijan*, 21-9-24, p-25)

Faith in Human Nature

Gandhiji declared himself to be "an irrepressible optimist". His optimism rested upon his belief in the infinite possibilities of the individual to develop non-violence, "The more you develop it in your own being, the more infectious it becomes, till it overwhelms your surroundings and by might oversweep the world. (G.Tendulkar, *Mahatma*: Vol.V, p.14). The very basis of the philosophy of nonviolence is grounded on the belief in the efficacy of conversion as a method of winning the opponent. It was one of his fundamental believes. In 1920 he said, "I refuse to suspect human nature". (*Young India*, 4-8-20). In 1926 (*Young India*, 25-12-20) he wrote: "The most practical, the most dignified way of going on in the world is to take people at their word when you have no positive reason to the contrary. I refuse to believe that the tendency of the human nature is always downward". A few months later (*Young India*, 3-2-27) he declared: "Men like me cling to their faith in human nature.....all appearances to the contrary notwithstanding".

Gandhiji placed man above institutions. He categorically stated man and his deed are two distinct things. It is quite proper to resist and attack a system, but to resist and attack its author is tantamount to resisting and tackling oneself. For, we are all tarred with the same brush and are children of the one and the same creator and as such divine powers within us are infinite. To slight a human being is to slight those divine powers thus to harm not only that being but with him the whole world" (*An Autobiography* by M.K. Gandhi p.337) or "I have discovered, that man is superior to the system he propounded. And so I feel, that Englishmen, as individual are infinitely better than the system they have evolved as a corporation" (*Young India*, 13-7-21, p. 221).

Human Perfectibility

Gandhiji did not expect complete realization of the ideal. Though "Human life is a series of compromises and it is not always easy to achieve in practice what one had found to be true in theory". (Tendulkar, Vol. IV, p.89). He exhorted not to lower the ideal of human development. Let us be sure of our ideal. We shall ever fall to realize it, (*Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, G.A. Natesan & Co., Madras P. 363) He believed that "satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment. Full effort is full victory" (*Young India*, 9-3-22, P. 141) "The virtue of an ideal consists in its boundlessness, But, although religious ideals must thus from their very nature remain unattainable by human being although by a virtue of their boundlessness they may seem ever to recede further away from, us, the nearer we go to them, still they are closer to us than our very hands and feet because we are more certain of their reality and truth than even our own physical being. This faith in ideal constitutes real life in fact, it is man's all in all".

(*Young India*, 22-11-28, p.391)

"Man" according to Gandhi, will ever remain imperfect, and it will always be his effort to be perfect" He knew that man at the present state of his being was not perfect, but that did not negate the theoretical possibility of further development which amounted to his perfectibility. This idea of human perfectibility is a key-point for the philosophy of nonviolence. And this belief logically leads to the conclusion of conversion and remaking of man. In his own words, in the application of the method of nonviolence, one must believe in the possibility of every person, however deprived, can improve oneself (*Harijan* 122-2-42 P. 49) Or as he put it when I was a little child, there used to be two blind performers in Rajkot. One of them was a musician. When he played on his instrument, its fingers swept the strings with an unerring instinct and every body listened spell bound to his playing. Similarly, the chords in every human heart. If we only know how to strike the right chord we bring out the music" (*Harijan* 21.5.39, p.136).

The rationality of human nature is the pre-condition for its theoretical perfectability.

A believer in rebirth, it was only natural for him to believe that moral progress made in this life would be of avail to us in the after life. Thus his faith in human perfectibility was not merely a moral conviction but was ultimately based upon his metaphysical assumptions.

"Bapuji never started by suspecting a person. Many people deceived him, but he continued to trust them. It was his firm conviction that every person possessed good and bad qualities. Everybody therefore, should be provided with equal opportunities for his/her betterment. A day must come, when the sinner is sure to admit his errors and feel sorry for them. He did not behave in punishing offenders. In his opinion, real punishment lay in feeling dependent. To him true repentance consisted in not repeating the error. (Brijkrishna Chandiware, *At the Feet of Babu*, pp.375-306)

Mahatma Gandhi's whole life symbolized the spirit of struggle-nonviolent-against all sorts of oppression and inequality, racial, colour, caste or class. His approach was individual-moral, since he believed that the human heart held the key to all social and political dynamics but hen the individual – a morally regenerated individual – of his conceptions was not someone living in isolation from the organic whole of the society. Gandhi needed a band of individual – fearless, self-restrained, self conscious – in the first instance to 'awaken the slumbering masses of India from their semi comatic condition. Without band of idealistically-inspired individuals; no movement for political emancipation or social reform could be possible. The secertic rigour and the puritan ethical discipline that a Satyagraha was obliged to under go was necessary for such a purpose.

(Buddhadeva Bhattacharyya, *Evolution of the Political Philosophy of Gandhi*)

The following excerpts have been taken from *Gandhian Philosophy* by O.P.Dhiman.

The Nature of Man

Man is a complex multi-dimensional being including within him different element of matter, life, consciousness, intelligence and the divine spark" Dr.S.Radhakrishnan, *The Bhagavad Gita*, Introductory, P.46). At different times because of different influences the whole of human nature has been seen by the wise and exalted from the point of view of his phase or that phase of Man giving rise to different concepts of man.

Astronomical concept of man looks at man as a tiny physical process lost in the vast encompassing spaces of galaxistic universe. Biological concept of man focuses him as a being and regards as the last stage of a protracted planetary evolution. Animalistic concept of man concentrates upon his elementary appetite. Libertarian concept of man focuses his freedom of choice and sees him master of his history. Divine concept of man interprets the individual's whole being in terms of a relation to Eternal Spirit.

The Ideal Man in Different Systems of Thought

The ideal man for Greek philosophy is the lover of wisdom. Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, as the only representatives of Greek thought exhorted man to tend his soul by which they mean the development to the rational part and attached the highest importance rational knowledge and its cultivation. For Jewish thought the ideal man is one, who is assured of God's interest in him. Man is in need

and he is a need of God. The need is the need for human righteousness. It is often said that man is created as an image of God. But what is the nature of God in whose image man is created? The divine pathos is expressed as love, compassion, and mercy and behind all these is God's concern for human righteousness. If man is righteous, he becomes holy and acquires the attribute of holiness, which is an essential attribute of God. In short according to Judaism, the ideal man is the ideal image of God and he becomes an ideal image, if he embodies ideal righteousness. For Chinese thought, the ideal man is a sage. As Fung Yu lan observes, not some particular kind of man and the character of the ideal man, is sageliness within and kingliness without". Thus, the tone of Chinese philosophy is more human and humanistic than that of the Greek, Jen or love or human heartedness which is derived from the Chinese word for man, is the highest virtue and therefore man should cultivate it to the highest degree possible. In conclusion, he who is fully and truly man is the sage, in the true sense of the word. Indian thought goes further and maintains that the essence of man is even beyond reason and it is the *atman* as higher than reason and transcending all human relationships. In Indian thought, the man of self realization is indeed virtuous and develops a sense of detachment from the world and its values. He is also wise in the sense that he is able to discriminate between the eternal and the transit and that he belongs to the former. When the essence of man is the *atman* and it is the highest good, thus man is essentially good. However, the Chinese do not mean that something within man is essentially good but that man, as man his human nature, is essentially good or basically good. Jen as a virtue embodied in love and human heartedness, is higher than in or righteousness and some Chinese philosophers desire righteousness from human heartedness and the fundamental belief of the Chinese is that human nature is basically good.

Gandhian Concept of Man

Whereas Communism stresses the economic aspect of human nature and democracy idealizes the libertarian concept of man, Gandhi idealises the spiritual aspect of man. Gandhiji believed that man is not merely a bundle of flesh and bones, but something more than and beyond this. Behind all this visible but bicameral and unconscious matter, there is a spirit, a soul indivisible eternal all-pervading and self-conscious. It is a part and parcel of God. In other words, it is godhead with him, it is this belief of Gandhiji which made him hate the sin, not the sinner.

The Dignity of Personality

For Gandhiji "the individual is the one supreme consideration. Personality is sacred because the soul in man is part of God. In fact what is reality in man is only the soul; he is nothing but Brahman. "Gandhiji's belief in the *atvaita* doctrine that there is but one Brahman in all, whether it be human or sub human beings means that all living beings are bound together inseparately to God. It makes man the servant of God's creation and its lord". (*Harijan*, 12-11-38).

It means also that whatever happens to one body must affect the whole matter and the whole spirit (*Harijan*, 12-11-38). This is why Gandhiji believes that "if

one man gains spiritually, the whole world gains with him and if one man falls, the whole world fails to that extent. This is a conclusion of great significance since we find in it a powerful plea for universal education it is often observed fact that some times one great person exalts so many and sometimes one corrupt persons corrupts so many.

Equality of Man

Gandhiji believes in equality between man and man. His concept of equality of man is also derived from the concept of the Universal soul. He says, "In my opinion there is no such thing as inherited or acquired superiority. I believe in rock bottom doctrine of *advaita* and my interpretation of *advaita* excludes my idea of superiority, at any stage whatsoever "I believe implicitly that all men are born equal. All, whether in India or in England or America or in any circumstances what ever, have the same soul as any other. I consider that it is unmanly for any person to claim superiority over a fellow being. He who claims superiority at once forfeits his claim to be called a man" (*Young India*, 29-9-27) This is in the line with Christian belief that man's worth arises not from his civic status but from his being a child of God "Because we are children of God, all men are brothers" (Jeffreys : *Education, Christian or Pagan*, p.4). Gandhiji's letter to Rev. Keithahn makes this concept of equality clearer still. "All men he says are born equal, but none is much stronger or weaker than other physically and mentally. Therefore, superficially there is no equality between the two. But, there is an essential equality in our nakedness. God is not going to think of me as Gandhi or you as Keithahn. And what are we in this mighty universe. We are less than atoms, and as between atoms there is no use asking which is bigger. Inherently we are equal. The difference of race and skin; of mind and body, and of climate and nature are transitory; *Harijan* (13-3-37) Gandhiji's disarming humility and his gross identification with the masses, the poor and the downtrodden stem from this kind of thinking.

Free Will versus Pre-determination

Gandhiji's notion of the presence of God in man amounts to another belief that man has free will, reason, conscience and love. Man is the maker of his destiny. If he chooses to use his reason correctly and guides his life by listening to the dictates of his conscience (the inner voice of God) and lives with his fellow beings with love in his heart, he can realize God and bring heaven on earth.

In tune with the Hindu doctrine of Karma and rebirth in which Gandhiji believed, he interprets both as favouring the spiritual growth of the individual instead of working to put him in chains. The law of Karma is inexorable and impossible of evasion. There is thus hardly any need for God to interfere.. He laid down the law and as it were retired" (*Autobiography*, p.563) Any breach of the divine law is sure to have its consequence. "We are all makers of our destiny. We can mend or mar the present and on that will depend the future".

(*Ethical Religion*, p.8)

All the same, man is limited in the sense that the continuity of the previous *Karma* limits the range for the exercise of our free will. There are some other limitations, which cannot be overcome the limitation with which one is born, the laws of nature to which man is subject and the hardened core or his own habits and tendencies, which begin to 'drive' him. Thus, Gandhi recognizes that "the free will which he enjoys is less than that of a passenger on a crowded deck" (*Harijan*, 23-4-40). But in spite of all these limiting influences and within his own field, man has sufficient freedom for exercising his will and moulding his environment, body and mind. The freedom we have may be little, but it is real in the sense that we are unfettered to choose how we use that freedom. We can choose to act at the level of decision, instead of being acted upon at the level of cause and effect" (Jeffreys, p.123).

Gandhiji believes that though our will is free, "we cannot command results we can only strive" (*Harijan*, 6-5-39) Man can change temperament, can control it but certainly, not eradicate it. God has not given so much liberty. If the leopard can change its spots then only can man modify the peculiarities of his spiritual constitution (*Satyagraha in South Africa*, p.219) Of course, he can counter act the effects of past mistakes by attaining complete detachment, (*Harijan*, 17-9-46) but, "in spite of the greatest effort to be detached no man can altogether undo the effect of his environment or his upbringing" (*Young India*) While conceding that people controlled by their environment, Gandhiji would like them to live by self-direction and not by mere habit. In other words, he would like them to live as 'persons' acting at the moral level. He does not believe in complete freedom which might enable man to sever himself from or transcend nature. Such freedom can mean only chaos. He does not favour freedom that detracts from the moral path.

The 'Self' in Self Expression

Gandhiji points out that purity of means is the only safe means to minimize evil... in order to overcome evil, one must stand, wholly, outside it i.e., on the firm solid ground of unadulterated good (*Young India*, 23-2-21).

Man's body is a product of nature and so, physical. But consciousness, reason, will, emotion and such other qualities and power which man has are expression of the spirit of soul. The true self is this spirit; not the finite self with its lust and passions. When Gandhiji preaches self expression, the self is used in his restricted sense and not in the sense in which the term is used by the Naturalists. The false self should not be allowed to express itself. If man yields to the temptation says, Prof. Jeffreys, "to subside on the natural level he makes a beast of himself: and the beastliness of man is something quite different from the naturalness of the beast". But he wills, man can follow the spiritual path, and become more and more like God in love, goodness and abiding joy; for the divine powers within are infinite.

Progress of Man

As a believer in the theory of evolution. Gandhiji is conscious of man's animal origin and so he does not subscribe to the Wordsworthian view that the child

comes from heaven 'trailing clouds of glory' that man is born all good, and is an angel. We were perhaps all originally brutes, I am prepared to believe that we have become men by slow process of evolution from the brute". (*Harijan*, 2-1-38) Again, "Man must choose either of the two courses, the upward or the downward but as he has brute in him he will more easily choose the downward course than the upward, especially, if the downward course is presented to him in a beautiful garb... the downward instinct is embodied in that (men) (*Harijan*, 1-7-33). Thus Gandhiji concludes that every one of us is a mixture of good and evil, the difference between the cultural and the brute being only a question of degree. So long as man is in the flesh even the greatest man can only be imperfect. There is no one without faults, not even men of god. They are men of God not because they are faultless but because they know their own faults - and are ever ready to correct themselves". (*Harijan*, 22-1-39). The glory is that man is not mere brute. He is above all, the soul and so even the more brute of men has potentiality for goodness. It is this self conscious impulse to realize God inherent in him that distinguished man from the beast. As Gandhiji says that, "We are born with brute strength but we were born in order to realize God who dwells in us. That is the privilege of man and it distinguishes him from the brute creation".

Viewing human history in a long-term perspective and judging thing as a whole in the light of the dominant trends, he feels confident that humanity is on the whole progressing. He says therefore "I believe the sum total of the energy of mankind is not to bring us down but to lift us up, and that is the result of the definite, if unconscious, working of the law of love" (Bose, N.K. *Selections from Gandhi*, pp.22-32).

But though it means, for him, that God as love and reason is working through man to help man raise himself, he does not forget that God has given man freedom to play the game in his own ways only trusting that man would learn to improve himself by his failure making them the pillars of a success. So Gandhiji speaks in a balanced tone. "If we believe that humankind has steadily progressed towards ahimsa (i.e. love) it follows that it has to progress towards it still further. Nothing in this world is static, every thing is kinetic. If there is no progression, then there is inevitable retrogression. No one can remain without the eternal cycle, unless it be God Himself (Bose N.K. *Selections, From Gandhi*, p.23).

The Summum Bonum of Life

According to Gandhi. "There is no contradiction between God and men, as well as in the lower order of creation. Soul transudes time and space and unifies all apparently separate existence" (Dhawan *Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi*, p.45) Gandhi also believes that human beings are working consciously or unconsciously towards the realization of spiritual identity". "Life" he says is an inspiration. Its mission is to strive after perfection, which is self realization. What I want to achieve-what have been striving and pining these thirty years, is self-realization-to see God face to face, to attain Moksha I live and move and have my belief in pursuit of this goal". (*Autobiography*, p.4).

This is the ideal which he prescribes for all and sundry. Because "the soul is one in all, its possibilities are therefore, the same for everyone". (*Harijan*, 18-5-40) Gandhiji says, "I wear the same corruptible flesh that the weakest of my fellows wear, and am, therefore, is liable to err as any" (*Young India*, III) Therefore the ideals that regulate my life are presented for acceptance by mankind in general. I have arrived at them by gradual evolution. I have not the shadow of a doubt that any man or woman cannot achieve what I have if he or she would make same effort and cultivate the same hope and faith. (*Young India*, III, p.204) "And I claim that what I practise, is capable of being practised by all, because I am very ordinary moral open to the same temptations and liable to the same weakness as the least among us" (*Young India*, II, p.517).

Gandhiji looked at the world as real and hence reveals, "to attain my end it is not necessary for me to seek the shatter of a cave" (*Young India*, 3-4-24). He says "A cave dweller can build castles in the air whereas a dweller in a palace like Janaka has no castles to build. The cave dweller who hovers round the world on wings of thought has no peace. A Janaka though living in the midst of bomb and circumstance may have peace that passeth understanding (*Young India*, 3-4-24).

Thus Gandhiji believes that self-realization possible in and through society because he believes in "the absolute oneness of humanity' (*Young India*, III, p.79) and therefore to him there is complete identity between him and humanity. So, the goal of life self realization cannot be attained unless "greatest good of all-Sarvodaya is materialized".

To sum up, Gandhiji emphasizes the spirit nature of man and he believes in the exercise of free will as well as the effect of environment. According to him the summon bonum of man's life is self realization.

The true Vaishnava: He is the true *Vaishnava* who knows and feels another's woes as his own. Ever ready to serve, he never boasts. He bows to everyone and despises no one, keeping his thought, word and deed pure. Blessed is the mother of such a one. He revers every woman as his mother. He keeps an open mind and does not stain his ups with falsehood nor does he touch another wealth. No bonds of attachment can hold him. Ever in true with Ramanama, his body possesses in itself all the places of pilgrimage. Free from greed and receipt, passion and anger this is the *Vaishnava*.

(*Narasimha Mehta*)

Conclusion

It is interesting to note that the earliest conception of man in the *Rigveda* was the idea that man is a way fares or a margoza in. This idea has been made popular, after Lord Buddha enunciated the Doctrine of the Way or *Marga*, as one of the four noble truths. Asanga, the Buddhist monk of the second century. A.D., called the Buddhist way *Gnanamarga* or the way of knowledge, man is indeed a wayfarer and the way, however lies not from one point of space another, but from the world of outward reality to the inward real. The direction of the process of

the world is from the outward to the inward. Life is the inwardness which matter attains and the mind is the inwardness, which life attains in the process of world we observe. As such, the being of man belongs to this process and the success of life may be viewed as proportional to the inwardness he deliberately pursues and attains. According to Indian thought, the self or *atman* is higher than reason. Although both spiritual life and rational life are universal, according to Indian thought, the former is higher than the latter. Spiritual life is universal, because the spirit has the same nature and rational life is universal, because reason or *buddhi* has the same objective reference. One important feature in Indian thought is that reason or *buddhi* is understood as not merely intellectual but also ethical and even aesthetic. As such the highest rational life must be considered as ethical as well as aesthetical since the main feature of *buddhi* include not only cognitive assertion but also *dharma* or merit and *adharma* or demerit. In conclusion, we may say that virtue is knowledge and knowledge is virtue' where knowledge implies transformation of one's being and also attains ethical and spiritual significance. The safest interpretation seems to be that man is an integral and dynamic unity of all levels and state and it is the duty of science to study how the integrity is attained and it is the duty of religion to show how it can be utilized for raising man's consciousness to the level of the supreme. Above all, ethics and all the other sciences incidental to the life of man in society have also to show how this integrity can best be utilized in different spheres or aspects of life.

Gandhi's vision of human nature is holistic. It gives the right and due place to women. Hitherto human has meant only man. He, like the native (tribal) people recognize nature as part, part of humanity and vice versa. The interconnectedness of all living and non-living is the essence of Gandhian thinking. Humans have to achieve all round and total development: development of the body, mind, intellect and spirit. But the human is not alone. He exists in relationship with the society and nature. So they also need to be developed for a true human development.

Gandhian Concept of Humanism

Introduction

It is really no exaggeration to say that present age is an age of humanism. It is also remarkable that the present philosophical interest has shifted from God, matter, and science to man. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, in his interesting book: "Eastern Religions and Western Thought", observed as follows: "The world has found itself as one body. But, physical and economic interdependence are not by themselves sufficient to create a universal human community, a sense of personal relationship among men. Though this human consciousness was till recently limited to the members of the political states, there has been rapid expansion of it, after the war. The modes and customs of all men are now a part of the consciousness of all men. Man has become the spectator of man. A new humanism is on the horizon. But this time it embraces the whole of mankind", We have had several forms of humanism - The Deweyan form, which is naturalistic, the form given to it by Schiller, which is evolutionary and pragmatistic; the communist form, given to it

by the Marxians, based on economics and class struggle; another form given to it by Jullan Huxley, which is evolutionary and scientific, the theological forms like that of Martin, based on Catholic thought and the existential forms, which are of various kinds, ranging from the theological, like that of Mercier, to the atheistic, like that of Satre. There is common trend in all and the emphasis is on man and his values. In short, man cannot be ignored by any philosophy and he has to be retained at its centre. Man and his values are primary and their primacy has to be acknowledged by any philosophy. Philosophy, if it is true to itself, has to be a philosophy of life, not of one part of life, but of the whole. This life is the life of man and he wants a theory of life as his guide. In the final analysis, we come to the old advice of Socrates, "Known thyself", Pope declared that the noblest study of mankind is man himself. The *Upanishads* also declared, "Know thyself". Confucius in China made the same appeal that all thought and all theories of human activity are to be based on a proper understanding of man. In modern times, the whole world coming together more intimately and consciously than ever before and the problems of each have become the problems of all and it would be interesting and useful to know and to appreciate how man, his nature, his ideals and values are understood by each tradition and culture.

Humanism - Western Idia

In the West, humanism was an intellectual movement, which characterised Renaissance. It also represented the attitude of mind characteristic of this movement. Humanism represented an open break with many of the standard ideas of Middle Ages. It emphasized the dignity of man and his perfectibility. It considered this world as a legitimate object of interest and love; and it tended to place reason above revelation. It stressed education (for women as well as men) and held that the goal of education is a well balanced individual with all his capabilities fully developed. The language, literature, and thought of ancient Greece and Rome occupied a central position in the thinking of the humanists, not because of merely antiquarian interest or intellectual snobbery, but because the best products of these civilizations exemplified the ideals of humanism far better than did medieval literature, philosophy and theology. They thought that humanities as used by Cicero, to explain the goals of an intellectual and moral culture particularly befitting man. The humanists not only rediscovered classical texts and reviewed ancient literary types, themes and critical theories, they applied their scholarship to the establishment of accurate Biblical texts and especially in Northern Europe, sought to reform the church in education they stood for physical training as well as mental, and for teaching by reason and gentleness rather than authority and brutality.

Humanism began to develop in Italy in the 14th century and spread all over Europe in the 15th and 16th. The famous English humanist was Sri Thomas Moore, whose *Utopia* is famous.

In the west, Humanism is regarded as a philosophy which champions the cause of man's freedom and individually against a theological worldview. The Renaissance humanists like Eramus and of the Bible, the Papacy and the protagonists of the theists and ecclesiastical orientation. The humanism of Ludwig Fexerbach and Karl Marx in his earlier writings are frankly materialistic in his assumption. Due to the

impact of scientific thought sometimes has been assumed that there is an anti-thesis between belief in the religious world-view and the adherence of humanism, it is argued that humanism is opposed to the theocentric and transcendental world-view.

Marxian Humanism

Marx received from the scientific rationalism of the Enlightenment movement in France and Germany the belief in the stupendous powers of reason to create a better society and a happier future for man. To this extent, Marx was a product of the Renaissance spirit. He stated that by harnessing the powers and capacities of the mind, increasing rationalisation of the socio-economic process was possible. Nature was not to be propertied as a power of God but should be in consequence in a planned scientific way. Marx was a child of the scientific technological civilization of the Capitalistic West. He propounded the use of mechanized power for catering to the needs, not of a selfish group, but of the entire proletarian collectivity. He hoped that with the increasing perfection of the socialist society, human nature would undergo a transformation and there would be the consequent emergence of a new type of Socialized man, the man rid of religious superstitions and egoistic characteristics who would be interested in a programme of fraternity and comradeship.

Marx thought that the advance of science and technology would create the conditions for removing the painful toil and drudgery from the lives of the workers. But, the political shape of Marxism in action in Russia and China shows that what so ever progress they might have made in the expansion of heavy industries, in the creation of gigantic armed forces and in the advance of the standard of living of the citizens, there is no doubt that individual liberty has been crushed. Marx and Engles thought in terms of group and not of the individual. They were enamoured proletarian solidarity and they never appreciated the humanist demand of the enlightenment for individual liberty and programme. There is emphasis on nationalization of the means of production. But they have absolutely failed to appreciate the significance of individual conscience. Many communist governments have collapsed and the state violence used by communist regimes has come under severe attack. With iron hands, communist regimes suppressed the problems for a while and then they imagined that they have solved all those problems! But it exploded latter on with vengeance.

Gandhian Concept of Humanism

The concept of Human Nature according to Gandhi:

According to Gandhi, the real individual is an immortal spiritual entity. Man is said to be a divine spark. "All persons are children" of the same God "turned with the same brush", and the divine powers within us are infinite". Man is the citizen of the moral kingdom of ends and not mere mechanical and organic aggregation of physical forces and chemical elements. He has a sense of spiritual consciousness and moral internality. Being essentially spirit, he can rise superior to evil.

Gandhi accepts that God is truth, is the author only of goodness and never of sin, impurity, evil and falsehood. "I cannot account for the existence of evil by any rational method. To want to do so is to be on equal-with God. I am therefore

humble enough to recognize will as such. And I call God long suffering and patient precisely because he permits evil in the world. I know that he has no evil in him, and yet if there is evil. He is the author of it and yet untouched by it.

Gandhi nevertheless, emphasized that evil should be conquered and eradicated. Hence, like Surdas and Tulsidas, Gandhi always prayed to God for the divine mercy, which alone could cleanse a man's heart. Although at cosmic level, evil is inexplicable, at the individual level it could be traced to one's own actions. Gandhi traces the evil in man to his own evil *samskaras* or past tendencies. "I am a believer in previous births and rebirths. All our relationships are the result of *Samskaras* we carry from our previous births. God's laws are inscrutable and are the subject of endless search. No one can fathom them".

Gandhi had deep faith in the goodness of man's nature in spite of the existence of evil because he accepted that it was possible to realize the triumph of divinity. The essence of his philosophy of human nature is contained in this statement. "Man is higher than the brute and has a divine mission to fulfil. To find truth completely is to realize oneself and one's destiny". Man's true aim is the conquest not of external, but of his empirical self, because *Atmanigraha* or the suppression of the lower self can alone vindicate the greatness of human spirit. Man is essentially good and for asserting this goodness he should advance in the path of self conquest. But the belief in the fundamental and essential goodness and purity of the human soul and does not imply that society is the sole breeding ground of contamination and perversity. There is no dominant conception in Gandhi of the vitiating and corrupting effects of society on the pure individual as in Rouessau. Both Gandhi and Rousseau are agreed upon the inner goodness of human nature. But, there is difference with regard to the source of depravities. According to Rousseau - contamination is brought about by reason and institutional convention. Gandhi is more insistent on stressing that human depravity is due to one's past *samskaras*. Thus, he upholds a more individualistic view than Rousseau. But, he also recognized the society's responsibility for several evils.

Since Gandhi believed in the inherent sinfulness of human nature as being psychological he wanted to bring about psychological regeneration of man to bring out the inherently divine nature in man. He said, "Man in the flesh is essentially imperfect" and although he may be described as made in the image of God, he is far from being God, hence the task of moral education is to transmute the lower (*asura* or *tamasika*) self of man into his higher ideal (*sattvik*) self. "Human nature will only find itself, when it fully realizes that to be human it has to cease to be beastly or brutal. Though we have the human form, without the attainment of the virtue of non-violence, we still share the qualities of our remote reputed ancestors, the *orangosutang*".

Gandhi emphasized the necessity of constant efforts for the moral and spiritual remaking of man. He accepted the creative power of self suffering human individuals and by his philosophical notion that incessant efforts for the perfection of individuality be at the root of progress, he makes the exponents of modern thought aware of the significance of spiritual subjectivism. According to him, even social betterment depends upon individual efforts for self purification. This

purification has to be attained by prolonged *sadhana* and grace of God. The potential *sattva* has to be actualized. This can be attained by cultivating ahimsa in the following 3 manners (a) resolute will to root out untruth and ahimsa (b) constructive work and (c) basing domestic relations on ahimsa.

Moral and spiritual goodness is acquired by; a process of introspective scrutiny cultivation of character and the realization of the sense of unity with; living beings. Only *seva* and *sadhana* can lead to the true moral evolution of man which is dependent upon the slow inwardization of the great vows or *vratas* inculcated in the scriptures and accepted by Gandhi for himself and for the members of his Ashrama. Hence, he emphasized the dignity and sanctity of the conscience of the individual and prescribed an internal judgement for the rightness or otherwise of human actions and motives. Thus, moral evolution and not governmental co-ercion was the remedy. He also believed in touching the heart of his political opponents and had faith in the efficacy of the technic of appeal. He always appealed to man and especially to the *sattvik* and divine in man. He always started with the *atman* as a subjective entry.

Man is essentially a spirit. The spirit provides unity to the different phases of his existence and hence a comprehensive psycho-spiritual solution is needed. But this is dependent upon the energization of moral sensibilities and hence the stress should always be on the moral and spiritual aspect rather than on the intellectual the scientific and the institutional. The fundamental and ultimate solution of matter according to him, is the religious making of man. The human heart, he felt, holds the final key to all social and political dynamics.

Man has grown in the finer sensibilities from what he was in his primitive condition. The development of sentiments and emotions round the institution of the family is an additional testimony to the slow moral evolution of human nature. Even in the other realms of social, economic and political life there evinced a slow tendency towards the lessening of the areas of conflict. Gandhi stressed the technic of cultivation of altruistic virtues and feelings for bringing about a change in human nature which implies the suppression of demonic elements.

Gandhi's Spiritual Humanism

Gandhi's Humanism was rooted in the realization and spiritual experience of his whole being that all life was one and that life was but the manifestation and reflection of the reality itself. For Gandhi the transcendental aspect of reality was a truth of inner experience, no doubt. But, Its realization in everyday life was of immediate and paramount importance to him; that is why the truth of daily life, its experience through his own perception, observation, contemplation, were his preoccupations. The individual has no other way of realizing the truth of the totality of reality (transcendental cum-immanent) except through social life and relationship with others. Therefore, whether it was the suffering of labourers in South Africa or peasants of Kaira or the insult of one nation exploiting another through imposition of slavery, they all evoked the utmost effort on the part of Gandhi to serve the cause of suffering humanity. In short Gandhi identified with humanity, its joys and sorrows, its aspirations and inner seeking. He believed that it was through love alone he could serve it.

Gandhi was a great devotee of God but he had also immense faith in man. There was no antithesis between his humanism and his belief in divine providence. He said "My faith is in God and therefore in the people". Since there is no antithesis between God and Man in him he believed that the same soul, invisible, eternal all pervading and self-conscious, runs through lower as well as the higher order of creation. "I believe, he wrote in absolute oneness of God and therefore, also of humanity". Thought we have many bodies we have but one soul". It transcends time and space and unifies all apparently separate existence. God is organically bound up with humankind and all living beings. Hence love for man leads to the realization of God.

Gandhi was a humanist in two sense first for what he did for the downtrodden to emancipate them and secondly for his faith in the redemption and regeneration of man.

It is very interesting to note that Gandhiji firmly believed that his life belonged to the whole humanity and he wanted to do as much service for the humanity at large, as he could, while his life lasted and he wanted to be thoroughly and usefully used up for humankind, before he passed away. To him life was no brief candle, but a luminous torch, which he had got hold of for a while and he desired it to burn as brightly and magnificently as possible, before passing it on to future generations. Gandhiji's clarion call and message to the mill agents of Ahmedabad. Whose character he transformed, can be expressed as follows, "The relation between mill agents and mill-hands ought to be one of father and children, or as between blood brothers. You should hold all your riches as a sacred trust to be used only solely in the interests of those who sweat for you and to whose industry and labour you owe all your position and prosperity. I want you to make your labourers co-partners of your wealth... What belongs to you is the right to an honourable livelihood no better than that enjoyed by millions of other. The rest of your wealth belongs to the community and must be used for the welfare of the community. This was his great doctrine of trusteeship, based on principles of humanism non exploitation and equality of all men and unity of humanity. Above all Gandhiji repeatedly mentioned that his mission was not merely to achieve freedom for India, but through realization of freedom for India to carry on and fulfil the mission of the brotherhood of men and that he was really involved in achieving the broadest good of humanity at large.

Mahatma Gandhi was a product of Indian culture, civilization and philosophy and so he interpreted every activity of human beings, in terms of spirituality. His conception of man is not materialistic but spiritualistic, since he considered that in each and every being, there is divine spark. In short his humanism is not materialistic; humanism, but spiritual and moral based on the principle of oneness of life, as well as the basic goodness of man. According to Gandhiji the best form of worship is service to humanity and Gandhiji, was a great humanist in the true sense of the word, since he believed in the bright and glorious future for humankind and also worked for the betterment and upliftment of the poor and the downtrodden. Above all, the humanism of Mahatma Gandhi was extraordinary, as well, as practical; since he extended the humanistic and spiritual ideology in all fields of human activities. We may say that the principle of trusteeship is based on his spiritualistic and humanistic approach to the problems of economics and the principle of Sarvodaya are not merely economic principles, but also humanistic. Gandhiji introduced the principle of the welfare of all

on the basis of his philosophical humanism and rejected the utilitarian doctrine, the greatest good of the greater number of people. His humanism was a natural corollary of his realization of the presence, of God in all human beings and was ultimately based on the strong and solid foundations of oneness of life. In the words of Gandhiji himself. "My creed is service to God and therefore of humanity... I believe in the essential unity of man and for that matter of all that lives". When there were religious conflicts and tensions in many parts of India, Gandhiji remarked "you must not loose faith in humanity. Humanity is just like a big ocean. If a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean itself does not become dirty".

The suffering of the Indian peasants brought forth all the agonies of his soul. Hence, he tried to identify himself with the lowliest, the disinherited, the meek and the humblest. He cried "It is the greatest tragedy I know of those men and women our brothers and sisters-dying slow, torturing death. There is an eternal conflict in their lives and they seem to mock at us with the life they live". In his concern for the poor and the downtrodden and his exhortations for the betterment of their lot, he named them as *Daridra Narayan* - God of poor or God appearing in the hearts of the poor. He got this word from Deshbandu C.R. Das. In the tattered bodies of the peasants and workers in Champaran, Gandhi saw the concrete embodiment of God, Truth and Ahimsa. His overflowing love for the suffering and exploited humanity revealed his intense humanity. The essence of the humanist spirit is deep love for the people. Gandhi's sincere love and regard for the people was an expression of humanism. He says "I will give a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt or when the self becomes too much with you apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen, and ask yourself. Will the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to Swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and yourself melting away."

It was his humanism that led him to undertake the satyagraha in South Africa. It was again this humanism that led him undertake the many other satyagrahas in his own motherland. Again it was only this humanism that made him, live amidst the poor in his many ashrams and made him a lonely pilgrim in the bloodshed alien land like Naokali. His humanism inspired his sufferings in serving the sick and the leper. Like the Buddha of the ancient times his humanism embraced God's all creations not man alone. Like Jesus Christ his humanism considered none his enemy, none his object of hatred. Even General Smuts, who considered Gandhi his political enemy testifies to his humanism as follows. "However often he may differ from us we are conscious all the time of his sincerity his unselfishness, and above all his fundamental and universal humanity. He always acts as a great human, with deep sympathy for men of all classes and races and especially the under dog."

Sarvodaya and Trusteeship

It is the intense spirit of humanism gave rise to the principle of Sarvodaya and Trusteeship. He called upon the rich people to regard themselves as trustees of their wealth, because he believed all the land as also wealth belonged to

Narayana. Sarvodaya stands for the emancipation, the uplift and the elevation of all. It traces its theoretical roots in the vedic and vedantic teaching, that from a higher standpoint all living beings are participants in or portions of a super material reality. Hence, the good of all beings necessarily implies the good of all humanity has to be positively fostered. It repudiates, therefore, the limited gospel of the greatest good of the greatest number. It aims to serve the good of all and not merely the numerical majority. It is certainly not opposed to the concept of social and economic equality. Since all beings are reflection or manifestations of a supreme spiritual ultimate, hence all have to be provided with the opportunity for their greater development and perfection. Sarvodaya does not negate the importance of material commodities. It would refuse however, to regard them as the dominant goal of all human endeavours. Like Aristotle, Sarvodaya would like to use the eternal goods for the satisfaction of the human spirit. It would regard them as means and not as ends in themselves. But in Sarvodaya there is an all dominating moral and spiritual approach. Sarvodaya however is not merely a theory of ethical justice. It is emphatic in its quest also for distributive social and economic justice. In an era of the mad rush for power, the significance of Sarvodaya lies in stressing the permanent value of self-abnegation. Sarvodaya appeals to the mind and heart in terms of value and goals.

The philosophy and sociology of Sarvodaya based on the insights and experiences of Gandhi, is a reassertion of the evaluations and moral approach to the problems of humankind, which has been a part of ancient Indian culture for ages. Like Plato, Sarvodaya also believes in a regeneration of the human heart and mind. The philosophy and sociology of Sarvodaya can add the moral tone to Indian civilization. The great contribution of Sarvodaya lies in the reassertion of the Gandhian moral approach to the problems of man.

Gandhi was a humanist, because he had faith in redemption and regeneration of man. In 1946-48 there was an upsurge of communal frenzy on an unprecedented furious scale. He was little perturbed. He saw the edifice he had built with the ardent *Tapasya* of over twentyfive years tottering but was still hopeful. Like a profound spiritual humanist he wrote. "You must not loose faith in humanity... Humanity is an Ocean; if a few, drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty". The essence of spiritual humanism as enunciated by Gandhi is to stress the significance of the universal values in man. The differences among men are apparent and superficial. The grave is the final destiny of all men. But fundamental spirit in man is undying and perennial. Hence all men should be treated with respect and decency and the dignity of all should be protected and defended. He pointed out, "No human beings is so bad as to be beyond redemption, no human being is so perfect as to warrant his destroying him whom he considers to be wholly evil". Gandhi's adherence to the absolution of truth and non-violence made, him hostile to this destruction of life in any form. Life postulates respect for it. He regarded all life as sacred. Human life is entitled to dignity, consideration and love.

Unlike the western humanists, Gandhiji loved man not because he attached any special value to the latter's emotions and feelings but because he considered him an aspect or a mode of God or the absolute, instead of accepting the empirical ego with its drives, passion as the centre of attention. Gandhi prescribed a hard discipline of the will of the taming of human desires so that final liberation on Moksha could be realized.

Gandhi as a Humanist

Admirers of Gandhiji tell us that Gandhiji's greatest contribution to mankind can be explained in one sentence, "Gandhiji humanised the human race". In modern times, we the human species are more in need of humanism than perhaps any other species. We call ourselves human beings, but that is only a little more than anything else and there is great need for the human beings to be humanised since the most elementary decencies in life, the most elementary respect for human life are lacking today in many parts of the world. Therefore there is the urgent need to recall and to practice Gandhiji's teachings and precepts in modern times. At his memorable trial for sedition in 1922, Gandhiji declared. "Non violence is the first article of my faith. It is also the last article of my creed". His compassion and humanity were as boundless as the universe. To-day when we have all kinds of social linguistic and communal tensions when the whites and the non-whites, Christians and Muslims, Sinyalese and Tamils-kill each other, let us recall and remind ourselves of Gandhiji's great words of wisdom. "Let us gather together under one banner all men from all religions and races and infuse into them the spirit of solidarity and oneness to the exclusion of all social, communal and parochial sentiments.... My Hinduism is not sectarian. It includes all that I know to be the best in Christianity, Islam. Buddhism and Zoroastrianism. Truth is my religion and ahimsa is the only way of its realization". Gandhiji had three important ideals or objectives and he ceaselessly strove to achieve them in his life and they are to achieve character, to channelize service and to institutionalise brotherhood and fellowship-his great humanism. He knew very well that without character any nation had no future and so he laid great emphasis on character building especially by the youth of the country. So, he worked hard to build up around him men of character and out of dust, he made men and women and out of men and women he made heroes and heroines. Einstein once remarked that the great destiny of human beings is to serve not to rule or to impose themselves on others in any way. In conclusion Gandhiji, true to this greatness, asked for nothing except the opportunities to serve his fellowmen - especially the poor and the downtrodden.

Gandhi's humanism was the pivot of all the different aspects of his wonderful personality. His humanism meant his utter devotion to the human interests - welfare of the individual men and women of the human race. According to Gandhi, the highest service to man will be our sincere endeavour for drawing out the divine nature in man. To gain this end, we have to be in communion with God and to worship him as the source of all noble virtues.

To serve man in his distress, in his poverty, in his illness and in his sorrows, to wipe out the tears from his eyes constitutes the true type of humanism and Gandhi was the votary of this genuine type of humanism. To translate one's noblest thoughts into action is the highest achievement of man; Gandhi's greatness rests on this achievement.

As morality has to be nurtured in the soil of religion, so humanism also is rooted in the deep faith in God. Humanism bereft of its life giving source of a living faith in God withers, like a flower-plant which has its roots taken off from the soil. Gandhi's humanism was only a corollary of his realization of the presence of God in all human beings in concrete shape and was ultimately based on the

bed-rock of Advaita philosophy. He wrote, "My creed is service to God and therefore of humanity. In another context he said "I believe in *Advaita*; I believe in the essential unity of man and for that matter of all that live". His humanism is thus different from the pattern which is advocated by the modern atheists, who conceive it as something floating like a gossamer without any subsistence or flowers paint held aloft uprooted. Gandhi loved individual man and woman. Edward Thomson said, "his humanity is one of the profoundest things that history has seen".

By virtue of his humanism he attracted like a magnet the people of different races, religions and creeds unto him and his followers in large number clustered round him to form a happy family as it were. His humanity was undivided and he loved all men irrespective of caste, creed or colours.

His humanism was practical. He invariably put into practice first and then he preached it. He did not hesitate even to risk his life to serve the suffering humanity. Once when there was an outbreak of plague in Bombay, he came forward unhesitatingly to work as the chief organizer of the committee constituted for the purpose of teaching preventive measure to the people threatened by that deadly disease. During the time of the first World War, Gandhi offered his services for nursing the wounded soldiers although he did not support any warfare.

His humanism admitted no hatred or enmity to anybody. He pardoned his assailant in South Africa and would not allow any action to be taken against him. Gandhi's heart went to the lowly and suffering. He gave up all luxuries voluntarily, to live the life of the poor. He would not even use a mosquito curtain as the poor of India had none. He used the cheapest and the simplest fare for his meal and travelled third class, to realize the sorrow and suffering of the poor. He led a simple life to identify himself with the starving millions. In the words of Tagore, "He stopped at the thresholds of the hut at the thousands of dispossessed, dressed like one of their own. He spoke to them in their own language. Who else has felt like him that all Indians are his own flesh and blood?"

Gandhi called untouchability a blot on Hinduism and tried his utmost to atone for the injuries, which the caste Hindus, meted out to them throughout ages. He held that as humanity is one and indivisible, he was responsible as a part and parcel of humanity for any sin committed by any other part. For this reason he resorted to fasts on so many occasions to atone for the sins of his fellow men.

In later days he used to live in the Bhangi colony at Delhi to feel like one of the untouchables. He said as early as 1924, "We must first come in living touch with them by working for them and in their midst. We must share their sorrows, understand their difficulties and anticipate their wants. With the pariahs we must be pariahs and see how we feel to clean the clothes of the upper classes and have the rains of their table thrown at us."

In another context he said, "If I have to be reborn I should be born as an untouchable, so that I may share their sorrows, sufferings and charges levelled at them, in order that I may endeavour to free myself and them from the miserable conditions.

He dedicated his life fully to the service of humanity and all his works were marked by amazing selflessness permeated by the deepest love for man. Gandhi once declared "I claim the love of the semi starved paupers of India. Swaraj means the emancipations of these million skeletons".

During the days of communal troubles following in the wake of partition of India, Gandhi's heart bled for the unfortunate people of India who were subjected to unspeakable violence and suffering. In those days his humanism reached its zenith and he resorted to 21 days fast at Delhi for securing place for them and went about wandering a remote villages of Noakhali for wiping out the tears or sorrow from the eyes of the suffering people and for establishing peace. Duty was given the top most priority by him. He could be as hard as the thunderbolt and as tender as the flower in accordance with the demand of duty.

Although he was all love for all beings yet he was relentless in adhering firmly to his spiritual ideal and he did not relax the principle of his high ideals even in cases of his near and dear ones. This firmness was due to his deep love for them. For, he wanted to moral lapses even at the risk of incurring their stop their displeasure. Thus he could be stern even to his wife or to Miraben whom he considered as his daughters. He could even rebuke Mahadev Desai, his most intimate disciple, and son like, when he found him at fault even in minor things. Yet he loved them all so dearly. He was indeed a hard task-master.

Although Gandhi's firm adherence to his principles towards the realization of his spiritual ideal brought forth the many distinctive features of his extraordinary personality and wonderful genius, yet his humanism or love of humanity was the cardinal point of his unique personality.

He was the most merciful man of the modern age as a distinguished thinker observed "His love of man was so great that he did not hesitate to nurse even a leper and to dress his ulcer with his own hands. While he was very busy carrying on negotiations in political matters of great importance with viceroy in Delhi, he did not forget the poor leper at Sevagram and he was anxious to be by the side of his patient, a Sanskrit scholar suffering from leprosy.

Conclusion

Leaders of humanity like Jesus Christ, Buddha, Mohammed, the Prophet and Gandhiji, the great social scientist can change the nature of man to such an extent that, after a few generations their followers may show different traits of character. Therefore, the question arises whether or not social psychology can be purely inductive study. Sometimes we wonder, whether the culture of the Americans, who entered the country in the "May Flower" is exactly the same as that of the present day Americans. Changes do occur, because man is a creative being. Though he cannot create himself, he creates and changes social relationships, ideals and forms of activity. Creativity implies freedom from the forms created and without freedom they can neither be created nor changed. In short the philosophy of man must be a creative humanism and not a deterministic humanism, as it has to take man as a creative being. Culture is the creation of man and he frames ideals, changes them and transforms nature according to them. Great leaders of humankind, including

Gandhiji succeeded in changing the ideals and cultures and in making man act in new ways and their success is due to the fact that the nature of man behind his creations is not exhausted in his creations. Since values of life are similar everywhere, the difference in national characters are bound to be toned down gradually, until man behaves similarly in similar situation in every part of the globe. Since man is the same everywhere, he can adapt himself similarly to the changing conditions of life and to new values that enter his mental horizon. Indeed! It is the faith that man is the same everywhere, inspite of differences of his cultural achievements and inspite of the different attitudes he has adopted to life, that in the near future a complete non-violent society free from nuclear arms race, on the lives of Sarvodaya society can be easily built up, and thus establish the Kingdom of God or the brotherhood and sisterhood of humanity on this planet.

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Exercise

1. Discuss Gandhian view of Human
2. "Gandhi was a great humanist" Explain.
3. Examine the Gandhian concept of Ramarajyam
4. Outline the universalism of Gandhi.

Application / Field Work

1. Are you a humanist? Give evidences for your answer.
2. Encounter three humanists.
3. Examine your vision of a human.
4. Discuss with a few people individually about their vision of human.
5. How will you imbibe Gandhian universalism.

GANDHIAN WORLD VIEW

Capitalism and Communism both being the offspring of industrial revolution, based their world view on materialism and rationalism. Though both these ideologies aimed at quite opposite goals they converge at the same position as far as high technology, rape of the earth, armament race, centralized economic and political power etc., are concerned. For both these have the same world view. They are essentially materialistic and hence find themselves in the same camp, threatening the very existence of human race.

Hence, there is a necessity of an inquiry into objective sources from which can be derived a natural philosophy a human beneficial way of regarding and relating to the world, capable of uniting those, who see the necessity for a new, stable relationship between civilized men and earth and of effectively challenging the erroneous beliefs and assumptions which are now prompting world annihilation.

Let us consider the assumption upon which the modern myths are formulated. These assumptions were derived from Darwinism, Newton and Descartes and therefore they call themselves scientific and rationalistic. "Darwin was a generation which believed almost without question, that Christian, scientific civilization was superior in quality to any other, present or past. And to that prejudice he gave what appeared to be scientific sanction with his borrowed phrase's 'The survival of the fittest'. That phrase amounted to a death sentence on traditionalist native people in many parts of the world, for it was seen as implying that since they had taken no part in the development of modern scientific consciousness, they had been left behind in the struggle to be the fittest and their races were, therefore, doomed by natural law to be supplanted by more vigorous, more inventive cultures. Karl Marx, who also saw history as a struggle for power, offered to dedicated *Das Capital* to Darwin; and Hitler, a confirmed Darwinian, acted quite logically in terms of his belief, when he undertook to make his people the fittest and most dominant at the expense of others. Darwinism has been found as supportive of scientific atheism as of capitalist expansion".

"The world-view of classical physics has its roots in the philosophy of the Greek atomists who saw matter as being made of several basic building blocks, the atoms, which are purely passive and intrinsically dead. They were thought to be moved by external forces which were often assumed to be of spiritual origin, and thus fundamentally different from matter. This image became an essential part of the Western way of thinking. It gave rise to the dualism between spirit and matter, between the mind and the body. This dualism was formulated in its sharpest form in the philosophy of Descartes division allowed scientists to treat matter as dead and completely separate from themselves and to see the material world as a multitude of different objects assembled into a huge machine. Such mechanistic view was held by Newton who constructed his mechanics on its basis and made it the foundations of classical Physics.

From the second half of the seventeenth century to the end of the nineteenth, the mechanistic, Newtonian model of the universe dominated all scientific thought. The natural sciences, as well as the humanities and social sciences, all modelled themselves after Newtonian Physics. But in Physics itself, the Newtonian model had to be abandoned at the level of the very small (in Atomic and Subatomic Physics) and at the level of the very large (in Astro Physics and Cosmology). It will be necessary for each science to find out where the limitation of this world-view lie in a particular context". In biology and medicine, psychology and economics limitation of this world view has been and ply realized. Holistic approach and organic view are strongly recommended in the place of mechanistic and reductionist model.

Eminent scientists in the field of physics are not in a position to say last word about what even material things are in themselves and much less has it been able to say about what men are in themselves. In his interesting book, *"Modern Science and Modern Man"*. Brinhman makes an important observations: "The most revolutionary of the to be derived from our recent experiences in physics, more revolutionary than the insights afforded by the discoveries of Galileo, Newton or Darwin. This is the insight than it is impossible a hauscend the human tolerance point. The new insight comes from a realization that the structure of nature may eventually be such that our processes of thought do not correspond to it sufficiently to permit us to think about it at all. We are now approaching a bound beyond which we are for ever stopped by pushing our enquiries not by the construction of the world, but by the construction of ourselves". We have to understand ourselves, understand man behind all his activities, scientific ethical and spiritual. Accumulation of scientific evidence suggests and strengthens a policy, not creed and policy is guide for human action. In conclusion a true theory is that which works and that work is human activity.

The Quantum Theory, the theoretical foundation of Atomic Physics, recognizes that probability is a fundamental feature of the atomic reality which governs all processes, and even the existence of matter. "Sub atomic particles do not exist with certainly at definite places, but rather show tendencies to exist". At the atomic level the solid material objects of Classical Physics dissolve into patterns in probabilities atomic partiless are not 'things' but interconnection between things, and these things' atomic connection between other things, and so on. Quantum Theory thus reveals a basic oneness of the universe. Einstein's Theory of Relativity has also deeply influenced our conception of nature. Relativity Theory has brought about a drastic change in our except of space and time. It has shown as that space is not three dimensional and that time is not a separate entity. Both are intimately and in separately connected and form a four dimensional continuum called space time. In relativity theory therefore, we can never talk about space with us talking about time and vice versa. The implication of the New Physics for science and society are tremendous. Some of the basic postulates upon which the physicians, psychologists and social scientists have model their view are undergoing revolutionary changes. The fundamental cultural significance of such a development would be the recognition that all rational approaches to reality are limited. Broad acceptance of this fact will be a necessary step towards a more balanced culture. While Gandhiji gives due respect to Rationalists as admirable

beings he warns "Rationalism is a hideous monster when it claims for itself omnipotence. Attribution of omnipotence to reason is as bad as a piece of idolatry as is worship of stock and stone believing it to be God". Gandhi further says in dealing with living entities, the dry syllogistic method leads not only to bad logic but sometimes to fatal logic. For if you miss even a tiny factor and you never have control over all the factors that enter into dealings with human beings your conclusion is likely to be wrong. Therefore, you never reach the final truth, you only reach at approximation, and that too if you are extra careful in your dealings".

Kropotkin disputed the very basis of Darwinism. He did not accept the survival of the fittest as the first principle in nature. He said, the nature's principle is mutual aid. Relationships between and within species are not primarily aggressive but cooperative. It is not so much a matter of struggle as of symbiosis. Nature is one creature, its various parts corresponding subtly and beneficially with all others. Gandhi fully subscribed to this saintly Kropotkin's "*Mutual-Aid*" and based his world view on this positive side.

Gandhiji... during his lifetime, tried his best to pave the way for an international society in which all nations-small or big-will be like equal partners. In other words, Gandhiji advocated a new world order arising from the restructuring or reconstruction of national societies or in his own words, "internationalism through non-violent nationalism". In short, Gandhiji dreamt of building an enduring world order by bottom upwards by two stages (1) Discipline or training of the individual on right lines (2) Transformation and reconstruction of the political and socio-economic structures of the nations along non-violent lines. Further, Gandhi strongly felt that a non-violent peaceful world order is possible, only when it is based on general global disarmament and establishing nuclear free zones in every country. The only answer according to Gandhiji, for disarmament on a worldwide scale, India with its rich heritage and spiritual traditions, must unilaterally declare nuclear free zone and disarmament so that the other nations would follow India's epoch-making example. In the transition or interim period we may have world police force at strategic points and boundaries, to keep order and discipline, in the absence of universal belief in non-violence. However, the international police force will be like a non-violent army or peace brigade or Shanti Sena whose motto will be service and co-operation rather than force and violence. In such a world society, based on non-violence, the smallest nation will feel as tall as the tallest, and there will be no place for imperialism, neo-colonialism, racism and exploitation of one nation by another nation. In fact, Gandhiji conceived of an international world order whose strength originates from the character of the individual composing it and not on the strength of armaments or nuclear weapons and missiles. In such a world organisation, all nation will participate as equals and partners in building up bridges of understanding and good will and establishing enduring and lasting world peace. In fact, Gandhiji took into account and carried in the broad sweep of his world view, the totality of all human conditions, all significant aspects and implications of the problems of a peaceful world community or new world order based on truth and nonviolence, justice and non-exploitation.

Mahatma Gandhi had the inner conviction of the oneness of humanity and his faith in the essential unity of humankind led him first bring together divergent

racess, cultural groups religious communities and different castes within India into a unified national consciousness. From the road of India and India's unity, Gandhiji wanted to march on to the unification of the world freedom which lies neither in homogeneity nor indiscriminate assimilation, nor in domination of one by another, but is the ability to be able to "live and led live" and in being able to contribute both materially and spiritually to be cumulative wealth of humankind. The ultimate aim of such an enterprise or endeavour is the growth of human consciousness of the unity and universality of all things and realization of the highest ideals. Gandhiji moralized this message in his own life and offered. This is a challenge to resolve the problems that divide humankind and to resolve the differences among all humankind.

R.R. Divahar defines Gandhian socialism and world view as a remarkable and harmonious synthesis of rights and duties of the individuals in all parts of the world and prosperity of one which they form indivisible parts. Sarvodaya society on a world wide scale stands for the rise, development and prosperity of one and all and there will be no exploitation of any kind of man by man and no basic conflicts or tensions among the societies or the nations. Gandhiji logically and psychologically extended the principles of the nations. Gandhiji logically and psychologically extended the principles of non exploitation, justice and equality from individuals to groups and family to the nations. In the final analysis, he envisaged or dreams a world federation of free nations or confederation of independent but interdependent free nations in which each free nation will be governed by democratic principles and by the ideals and goals of sarvodaya. Indeed this was all or gestalt or world view approach for the problems of humankind. According to Gandhiji the present day world is a system of nation states with violent social orders and so the last revolution will be a non violent revolution. We already notice holistic tendencies is evolution and ultimately world unity and world federation of free nations is bound to emerge and the whole of humanity will be busy fighting against the common enemies of humankind-poverty, ignorance and disease, pain and suffering. The latest scientific and technological developments still be utilized not for destructive purposes but to reconstruct a new humanity based on the world concept more peaceful, mere happier and more harmonious and thus establish the Kingdom of God-Brotherhood of Humankind on the earth.

According to Gandhi, "Though there is repulsion enough in nature, she lives by attraction. Mutual love enables nature to persist. Man does not live by destructive. Self-love compels regard for others. Nations because there is minimal regard among individuals composing them some day we must extend the national law to the inverse, even as we have extended the family law to form nations-a larger family". Gandhi extends his universal brotherhood even to the domain of animals. He says "I want to realize brotherhood or identity nor merely with the beings called human but, I want to nature identity with all life, even with such thing as crawl upon earth". He regarded the whole human family as one. He wanted freedom for India so that it can serve effectively the interests of the world at large. "It would not like to live in this world if it is not to be one world", asserted Gandhiji. His experiments and thought to the fields of politics, economics, nature cure, organic living in small communities, simple life style, education show

without any semblance of doubt that is a world view was, contrary to the orthodox views holistic, organic and ecological.

Only the political dimensions and a little bit of his economic ideas are known to us, Indians, because our minds and lives have been greatly influenced by his freedom struggle. Before he could apply the other dimensions of his thought so a wider national scale, he was snatched away from us by death. His holistic, integrated and organic approach to the life's various facts is acclaimed by the activities of the peace movement and counter culture people in the west, because this approach seems to be more relevant to their present predicate Ideal of one world and non-violent peaceful world order.

Mahatma Gandhi had the spiritual vision for the unity of humankind and also strongly believed in the moral unity of humanity and accepted the ideal of one world government or world federation. In fact, he became a world teacher, because of his eminent spiritual integrity. Gandhiji was not only a great political leader but also a world prophet who stood for universal harmony and peace and emphasized the applications of purity of means in the field of politics. In this way, he stressed the aspirations and ideals of the noble humanity of all ages and heralded the dawn of spiritual epoch in human history. Above all, Gandhiji will be reckoned as the world prophet of the divine kingdom of divine love and compassion truth and non-violence and as one who dreamed of one world concept or world federation of the free nations of the world. The foundations of Gandhian world view or a world community are based on Gandhiji's emphasis on the perfectibility of man and in the conquering power of human moral consciousness further. Gandhiji did admit that the spirit of nationalism is essential for any country. But, he felt that the highest consent is world community. We are living in a new world and in a new world, a new type of man is necessary, since modern science and technology have conquered both space and time and brought the nations of the world closer and nearer. As Dr. S. Radhakrishnan once observed, "The next change in the field of evolution, with reference to man, is not in the physique, but in the psyche or in the mind and the modern man must develop greater powers of awareness, understanding and oneness with his fellowmen." Mahatma Gandhi sang the song of human unity of all unity, amidst diversity in an era of ideological conflicts, social and cultural barriers. His gospel of love and peace must touch the hearts of men throughout the world. Self-awareness, self-determination and self-motivation must be the springs of all our actions to establish everlasting and enduring peace which is indeed indivisible. It is very remarkable the Gandhiji presented a unified vision of life and an integrated and total view of life to replace the problems created by alienation, fragmentation, compartmentalization and collapse of will power. Above all, Gandhiji advocated and worked for a radical and revolutionary change in human consciousness. His immortal message is "Be yourself, transform yourself, transcend yourself". In his integrated and total sociological frame work, the enlightened individual will cultivate and develop and enlightened group, which will expand into an ideal community leading towards an ideal society and finally towards an ideal world of unity and this world union would ultimately form the basis of a fairer, brighter and nobler life for a humankind and this is indeed the true and ideal picture or vision of Gandhian world view. In the words of Gandhiji himself, "Just as the

cult of patriotism teaches us today that the individual has to die for the family, the family has to die for the village, the ; village for the district and ; the family has to die for the village, the ; village for the district and ; the district for the province and the province for the country, even so a country has to be free in order that it may die, if necessary, for the benefit of the world. My idea, therefore, of nationalism is that my country must become free so that the human face may live and become united."

It is really no exaggeration, when we declare in unequivocal terms that Gandhiji was the first in the modern world to apply the same code of conduct in his personal life and the public life of communities, in national and international affairs. His message and appeals to the individuals, to the nations and to the world at large reflect clearly his integrated approach to life. He never admitted any dichotomy or watertight divisions in the life behaviour and activities of the individuals. Infact, Gandhiji's life was a totally integrated one and in the same manner, he advocated Gestalt or whole approach to solve world problems. Essentially, Gandhi the politician the social reformer, the peace-maker and the internationalists or the world citizen were all one and the same person. Infact, Gandhiji wore no masks, nor did he ever disguise himself. Underlying Gandhiji's approach to life and its problems, were the beliefs in oneness of God unity of life and above all oneness of humankind and his world-view. He once told Mr. Montagu, the then Secretary of State for India. "I could not be leading a religious life, unless I identified myself with the whole of humankind and that I could not do, unless I took part in politics. The whole gamut of man's activities to-day constitutes on indivisible whole. You cannot divide social, economic, political and purely religious work into water tight compartments. I do not know any religions apart from human activities and this religious outlook provides the moral basis to all our activities'.

Hence we see more appreciation in the western countries for Gandhi's ideas. His thoughts find ready response and intelligent acceptance among them. Gandhi has to be resurrected in India via the west, it seems.

Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful and A Guide for the Perplexed* Fritjof Capra's. *The Turning Point* are seminal books pointing to the alternative way. Capra has very brilliantly with all his academic experience in the field of modern physics at his command, discussed the limitations of the scientific approach. He says Eastern mystical intuition is not contradictory to Western Physicist's inventions. They are complementary and arrive at the same place. But, one has to modify his world view suitably. After reading these books, one can rediscover the Gandhian approach in a fresh and creative fashion. Gandhi's holistic, organic and ecological world view is not given world wide acclaim. As Vinoba rightly proclaimed the age of science and spirituality seems to be round the corner.

The following table prepared by Duane Elgin compares and contrasts the "Typical" American (Modern) view of life with the newly emerging one which comes closer to the Gandhian world view.

<i>Industrial era World-View</i>	<i>The Newly Emerging Alternative World View which tends towards the Gandhian World View</i>
1. The overriding goal in life is material progress.	The central intention in life is that of evolving both the material and spiritual aspects of life with harmony and balance.
2. Ever-increasing conspicuous consumption : "Good life" depends on the money power to buy the pleasure of life and avoid the discomforts.	Emphasis on conservation and frugality- using only as much as is needed. A satisfying life arises with balanced growth in co-operation with others.
3. Identity is defined in terms of material possession and social position and it is thought to be static or only slowly changing.	Identity is revealed in the process of living; It is experienced as fluid, being born anew in each moment.
4. The individual is defined by his or her body and is ultimately separated and alone.	The individual is experienced as both a unique and an inseparable part of the larger universe; who "we" are is not limited to our physical existence.
5. The universe is viewed as material and largely lifeless; it is proper for us, the living to exploit the lifeless universe for our own ends.	The universe is experienced as a vast living organism; it is a approximate to act in ways that honour the preciousness and integrity of all life.
6. Much emphasis is placed on self serving behaviour (get as much for myself as I can while giving no more than is required in return.	Much emphasis is placed on life serving behaviour (give as much of myself to life as I am able and ask in return no more than I require).
7. "Cut throat competition" prevails: complete against others: strive to "make a killing".	Fair competition prevails; co-operative with others intend to earn a living.
8. There is a "life boat ethic" in global relations.	There is a "spaceship earth ethic" in global relations.
9. The welfare of the whole is left to the working of the "free" market and/or federal bureaucracy.	Every person takes responsibility for the well-being of the whole and directly participates in promoting the overall welfare.
10. There is high level of dependency upon experts and specialists.	Much emphasis is placed on becoming more self-reliant and self-governing.
11. Much emphasis on autonomy and mobility.	Much emphasis on connectedness and community.

The alternative world view has gained more and more support by the recent scientific insight into the nature of the atom and the universe. Science and technology which originally supported the earlier world-view are themselves undergoing transformation and reveals the alternative world view. The recent developments in theoretical physics relativity theory and quantum mechanics, represent the first serious challenge to the mechanistic world-view.

Conclusion

It is really very remarkable that the common wealth of humanity has no written constitution and it based on community if ideals, freedom, dignity of the individual, rule of law, economic opportunity of all citizens and love of peace. The basic principles of the dignity and freedom of the individual is common to all religious faiths. It is interesting to note that Pascal tells us that man is a thinking seed superior to all the unthinking forces that fill the universe. Man is subject, not object and his subjectivity gives him inwardness and freedom. In a democratic society, the rich have to accept social obligations for the poor and the same principle to be followed in the world community. In short, the advanced and fully developed nations have to assist the less advanced and under developed nations. In modern times, it is the moral duty of each and every nation to pledge itself for international co-operation and peace. Since modern science and technology have conquered both space and time, all the nations of the world are brought nearer and closer and this is no isolation any more geographical, political, social, economic or cultural. The spirit of co-operation and co-operativeness and peaceful co-existence have to be carried beyond the nation to the community of nations. True democratic spirit means respect and tolerance to the opponent in politics, ethics and religion and the democratic way requires us to persuade them to agree with our point of view and adopt the methods of negotiation discussion, adjustment, open diplomacy and agreement and adopt peaceful co-existence and co-operative living. To day, the basic issue is no longer the victory of this or that nation, of this or that group this or that religion or ideology. It is the survival or suicide of man and the choice is either extinction or human brotherhood. The test of a nation's right to survive in the nuclear age is measured not by the size of its armaments, but by the extent of its concern for the human community as a whole. In other words, if we develop a higher loyalty to the world community, as Gandhiji preached the greatest era of human society or the Golden Age for world community or federation of nation will be within our reach. In conclusion, Gandhiji spelt out the moral principles on which our reach. In conclusion, Gandhiji spelt out of the moral principles on which modern civilizations and world unity rest and they are truth and love, satya and ahimsa and world unity and global peace will be achieved only to the which people all over the world respond to these higher principles and ideas.

Exercise

1. List the basic features of Gandhian world-view.
2. "Gandhian world-view will be appreciated better in the years to come" - Discuss.
3. List the basic features of mechanistic world-view.
4. Trace the emerging new scientific world-view and establish its support to the Gandhian world-view.

For Further Reading

Satish Kumar (ed)	:	<i>The Schumacher Lectures I&II</i>
Fritj of capra	:	<i>The Tao of Physics</i>
Gary Zukav	:	<i>The Dancing Wo. Li Masters</i>
Bob Toben	:	<i>Time, Space and Beyond</i>
Paul Davies	:	<i>God and the New Physics</i>
Arthur Young	:	<i>The Reflexive Universe</i>
M.K.Gandhi	:	<i>Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule</i>
-Do-	:	<i>All Men are Brothers</i>
Alan Wolf	:	<i>Taking the Quantum Leap.</i>

Application / Field work

1. Give your own World-view and compare that with that of Gandhi
2. Encounter three persons about their World-views.
3. How "Worldviews" may be transformed. Give example.
4. Witness Discovery Channel to get some insight into the current and latest developments in the Narious branches of Science and critically examine them in the Gandhian vision.

RELEVANCE OF GANDHIAN LIFE STYLE

Life Style in a Changing World - Alternative Life Style Today - Examples

Gandhiji led a very simple unostentatious life. The simplicity was born out of his belief and conviction that the earth's resources are limited and human beings also should limit their requirements. They should restrict their use of resources to satisfy only their biological needs. Gandhiji once said about himself. "I own no property and yet I feel that I am perhaps the richest man in the world. For I have never been in want either for myself or for my public concerns. God has always and invariably responded in time..... It is open to the world, therefore to laugh at my dispossessing myself of all property. For me the dispossession has been a positive gain. I would like people to compete with me. In this context I am the richest treasure I own".

(*Young India*, April, 1925)

"The life I am living is certainly very easy and very comfortable, if ease and comfort are mental states. I have all I need without the slightest care of having to keep any personal treasures. Mine is a life full of joy in the midst of incessant Work. In not wanting to think of what tomorrow will bring for me, I feel as free as a bird".

(*Young India*, October, 1925)

It is an interesting story to know how Gandhiji attained this mental status. In 1930 while Gandhiji was in South Africa, a Seekers held. Gandhiji at this time decided to have deeper diving into *Bagavad Gita*. Words like *aparigraha*, *samabhava* in the Gita, had gripped him "How to create and preserve that equitability was the question? How was one to treat alike insulting, insolent and corrupt officials, coworkers of yesterday raising meaningful opposition and men who had always been good to none? How we one to divest oneself of all possessions"? Was not body itself a possession? Was I to destroy all the cupboards of came the answer: I could not follow Him, unless I gave up all I had. My study of English law came to my help. Snell's discussion of the maxims of equality came to my memory. I understood more clearly in the light of the *Gita* teaching the implication of the word 'trustee'. My regard for jurisprudence, increased, I discovered in it religion. I undesired salvation should act like the trustee who, though having control over great possessions, regards not an iota of them as his own. It became clear to me as day light that non-possession and equitability presupposed a change of heart, a change of attitude..... To my brother who had been a father to me, I wrote explaining that I had given him all that I had saved to me, I wrote explaining but that henceforth he should expect nothing from me, for future savings if any would be utilized for the benefits of the community".

Another feature of his life style was his identification with all the living beings. Gandhiji believed in the unity of life. He considered that life is one and that all life comes from one universal source. He had faith in the oneness of God

and had belief in the indivisibility of humankind. He thought that human bodies are different but the soul that resides in them is one and the same. This theory of Nonviolence is based on this assumption that the soul that resides in all individuals is the same. This respect for all religions is based on the belief that there is one God behind this Universe.

Another unique feature of his life style is that he never said a thing which he himself did not practise. He believed in the educative influence of personal example. His life was his message. About this the greatest scientist and humanist, Dr. Albert Einstein Said: "Gandhi is unique in political history. He has invented an entirely new and human technique for the liberation struggle of an oppressed people and carried it out with the greatest energy and devotion. The moral influence which he has exercised upon thinking people throughout the civilized world may by far more durable than would appear likely in our present age, with its exaggeration of brute force. For the works of any statesman are permanent only in so far as they arouse and consolidate the moral forces of their people through their personal example and educating influence.

We are fortunate and should be grateful that fate has bestowed upon us so luminous a contemporary-a beacon to the generations to come. His living quarter, food and clothing expressed his sincerity as a feeling individual.

Of the many images that have been presented of Gandhiji, two images have been very prominent-the saint and the politician. Many admirers of Gandhiji described him as a saint among the politicians and a politician among the saints. Romain Rolland portrayed Gandhiji as a great saint and very appropriately described him as "the saint Paul of our times". It is interesting to note that Gandhiji himself disclaimed the appellations of saint, ascetic, sanyasin and Mahatma and described himself simply as one who claimed only to be a humble searcher and seeker after truth, indicating clearly his humility and in his humility lies his greatness. Above all he knows his limitations and weaknesses and as one who made mistakes and admitted those mistakes, when he made them and frankly confessed that he, as a scientist was making experiments in truth. Further, he regarded his Mahatmaship as an oppressive burden and ocularly remarked that there was not a moment when it might be said to have tickled him. He also disclaimed position of a prophet because of his conviction and faith that the moral values he sought to translate into his personal and political acts could be applied by one and all so as to transform human relationships and the very nature and texture of social and political activities. All the above assertions of Gandhiji clearly indicate his simple and unostentatious life-style and voluntarily shunning or avoiding mundane fame, praise and approbation and his spirit of non-attachment and self sacrifice, like at true *Karmayogi*. In order to grasp and appreciate Gandhiji's moral and political thought, it is not necessary to critically evaluate. Gandhiji clearly indicate how difficult it is to assess his multidimensional personality and his life style. However, we are bound to accept his profound integrity as a great thinker and as relentless seeker of truth. In conclusion, Gandhiji admitted his errors and his "Himalayan blunders-as a hard task-master and was always severe with himself, with Kasturba and with his ashramites. If we still doubt his integrity, honesty, nobility, and self sacrifices, it is a reflection upon us and not upon him and his life-style in all departments of life.

Dr. K.G. Saiyidain delivering the Patel memorial lecture in the year 1969 on 'Gandhi's lovable personality' says, "Many years ago, I read the book (*The Story of My Experiments with Truth*) and it gave me a glimpse of his mind, simple and intricate modern and yet steeped in tradition. Some months ago, when I was in Canada, I happened to read it again and it opened new visits, which I missed at the first reading. Perhaps this is true of all great books: they do not yield their full treasures without the labour of thought and some assimilated experience of life."

"As I read about these experiments, their success and failures, the groping towards and discovery of truth, and about his prolonged struggle with himself and how he forged the gem like purity of his personality and of what seemed rather ordinary and unpromising material in the beginning. I came to see something of the epicgrandeur of his development and to realize that this was no ordinary person. Here was a man, who was working on himself as a jeweller works on an uncut diamond. Also, he was extraordinarily introspective and self critical. He judged himself as ruthlessly as I was going to say as others, but I cannot do so because he judged them not ruthlessly but compassionately. So, how shall I put it? While he judged others compassionately, he judged himself as ruthlessly as if he were criminal before the bar of his own conscience, of the still small voice, which continue to whisper to him all his life, till it was strong enough to drown the cacophony of world noises".

In Sevagram Gandhi's hut was built under his special instruction. It was built in tune with the huts in Sevagram village. But, it has all the amenities that are necessary. Ivan Illich of Quavernace, Mexico, when he visited Sevagram in 1980 spent his maximum time sitting in Gandhiji's hut. Speaking about the hut he said:

"Today, in the morning, while I was sitting in this hut, where Mahatma Gandhi lived, I was trying to absorb the spirit of this concept and imbibe in me its message. There are two things about the hut, which have impressed me greatly. One is its spiritual aspect and the other is the aspect of its amenities. I was trying to understand Gandhiji's point of view in regard to making the hut. I very much liked its simplicity, beauty and neatness. The hut proclaims the principle of live and equality with everybody. Since the house which has been provided to me in Mexico, is in many ways like this hut, I could understand its split. Here I found that the hut has seven kinds of places. As you enter, there is a place, where you put down your shoes and prepare yourself physically and mentally to go into the hut. Then comes the central room, which is big enough to accommodate a big family. Today in the morning at four, when I was sitting there for prayer; four people along with me were sitting by supporting themselves to one wall and on the other side also there was supporting themselves to one wall and on the other side also there was place enough for as many people if they sit close together. This room is where everybody can go and join others. The third space is where Gandhiji himself sat and worked. There are two more rooms one for the guests and the other for the sick. There is an open verandah and also a commodious bath room. All these places have a very organic relationship".

I feel that if rich people come to this hut, they must be making fun of it. When I look from the point of a simple Indian, I do not see why there should be

a house bigger than this. This house is made of wood and mud. In its making, it is not the machine but the hands of man, which have worked. I call it a hut but it is a really home. There is a difference between a house and a home. The house is when man keeps in luggage and furniture. It is meant more for the security and convenience of the furniture than of himself. In Delhi, where I had been put up in a house, where there are many conveniences. The building is constructed from the point of view of these conveniences. It is made of cement and bricks and is like a box, where the furniture and other conveniences can fit in well. We must understand that all furniture and other articles, that we go on collecting in our lives will never give us the inner strength. These are, so to say the crutches of a cripple. The more of such conveniences we have, the more our dependent on them increases and our life gets restrictive. On the contrary, the kind of furniture I find in Gandhiji's hut, is of a different order, as there is very little cause of being dependent on them. A house little with all kinds of conveniences shows that we have become weak. The more we lose the power to live, the greater we depend upon the goods we acquire. It is like our depending upon the hospitals for the health of the people and upon the schools for the education of our children. Unfortunately both hospitals and schools are not an index of the health or the intelligence of a nation. Actually the number of hospitals are indicative of all ill-health of the people and schools of their ignorance. Similarly, the multiplicity of the facilities in living minimizes the expression of creativity in human life".

How Gandhiji came to discard his full dress which he was till then wearing and took to wearing the loin cloth only, was related by him in the course of an interview. He said :

"In 1921 Maulana Mohammed Ali was arrested at Waltair while he and I were going to a town in the South. He was torn from Begum Mohammed Ali, who was travelling with us. I was deeply moved. She bore the separation bravely and attended meetings in Madras. I left her in Madras and went as far as Madurai. On the way I saw in our compartment crowds that were wholly unconcerned with what had happened. Almost without exception on they were bedecked in foreign fineries I entered into conversation with some of them and pleaded for Khadi. For I had on other way open to me to secure the release of the Ali Brothers save through Khadi. They shook their heads as they said, 'we are too poor to buy Khadi and it is so dear'. I realized the substratum of truth behind the remark. I had my vest, cap and full dhoti on when these uttered only partial truth, the millions of compulsorily nakedmen, save for their langoti for inches wide and nearly as many feet long gave through their limbs their naked truth what effective answer could I give them, if it was not to divest myself of every inch of clothing I give them, if it was not to divest myself of every inch, clothing I decently could and thus to a still greater extent bring myself in line with ill clad masses? And this I did the very next morning after the Madurai meeting".

Long before adopting the poor man's dress, Gandhiji formulated *his ideas of national attire*. To the *Pioneer*, which was then owned and edited by the Europeans and which had writers deciding his national dress. Gandhiji wrote as follows in its issue of 4th July, 1917.

"I wear the national dress because it is most natural and the most becoming for an Indian. I believed that our copying of the European dress is a sign of our degradation, humiliation and our weakness, and that we are committing a national sin in discarding a dress which cheapness is not to be beaten on the face of the earth and which answers hygienic requirements. Had it not been for false pride and equally false notions of prestige Englishmen here would have long ago adopted the Indian costume....I avoid shoes for sacred reasons.

But, I find that it is more natural and healthier to avoid them whenever possible'.

Abdul Quadir a participant in the Round Table Conference of 1931, said "That the climax Gandhiji's freedom from correction in the matter of dress was reached when I saw him mounting the carpeted stairs of Buckingham Palace to greet the King and Queen with his blanket round his shoulders at the Royal party in honour of the Round Table Conference delegates and other visitors. I do not think that the palace had seen a visit or in that consume before, not is it easy to conceive that any one else would have been allowed the same freedom.

What was the secret of this power of Gandhiji? He himself answered once:

The Secret?

A clear heart,

A clear conscience

A cool head,

Regular communion with God

Abstention from carnal food and pleasure

No alcohol, smoking and condiments

A strict vegetarian diet,

And love for all my fellowmen".

The unique feature of his life style was that he was always growing towards more and more identification with the low and the lowest of God's creation. He claimed himself voluntarily what others could not have. This is what happened in Sabarmathi Ashram. Among the many problems the inmates of the Sabarmathi Ashram had to face was that of malaria, that visit the Ashram every year, after the monsoons. Doctors were consulted as to the cause and means of protection and one of the usual means suggested was the protection from mosquitoes with mosquito curtains.

"How can all afford a mosquito net? Is there no means which the poorest can afford? Gandhiji asked the doctors, who said there was one. That was keeping the body properly covered and sweating the face with kerosene oil. Gandhiji generally used the mosquito net but as soon as he saw that there was a poor man's remedy, he asked that the net to be removed and began sweating his face with kerosene oil before bed time.

Gandhiji's style of life was born out of his conviction and theory of life of non-violence. But, this could not be understood even by many of his close

associates. They began to question the continuance of Khadi and other Constructive Programmes after independence.

But, even in today's world, Gandhian style of life and his approach are very relevant, 85 percent of world's wealth is still held by 18 percent of its population. In other words 82 percent of the world's population has to depend on only 15 percent of the world's resources. But the gap between the poor countries and the advanced countries is increasing from year to year.

Since the developing countries are also getting industrialized the mental and spiritual "sickness" that they have brought about in the industrialized countries is fast spreading to these countries and similar problems are coming up. In India, for instance we have already begun to experience the hazards of water and air pollution. Our wild life is getting extinct. Crime is on the increase in many countries.

Gandhi's belief that human wants should be kept at minimum and that a balance must be maintained between man and nature and that one should not act for the destruction of the other still holds good. Nay, this is an eternal truth and this will hold good for the present and for the future. The fact that Marxist-Leninist Communism of the East and the Liberal Capitalistic Democracy of the West have failed to answer the present crisis and that they have brought about a situation where individuals have now the power to throw the global system, in which they live out of balance and even destroy it completely.

As a response to the problems of life and the alienation expressed in modern "establishments" and industrialized society "Alternative Culture" groups are emerging in many parts of the world especially in the west. *Their emphasis is on service rather than achievement, communication rather than prestige, and life in the here-and now rather than preoccupation with the future. The life style that they seek has many features akin to those which were practised by Gandhiji in the early decades of this Century. This is proof of the relevance of Gandhian life style for "the now".*

Conclusion

Mahatma Gandhi's teachings are contained in the various speeches he made and in the numerous articles and books he wrote. Above all, his teachings are to be called from the manner in which he situations numerous occasions. As Gandhiji himself declared. "My life is my message" clad in simple hand-spun, hand woven kathiawari garb he looked a different and unique from the rest of the leaders in India who were generally seen dressed in the best type of garments fashioned in foreign style. Gandhiji endeavoured, in his own, to bring into being, altogether new values based on the fundamental teachings of the ancient Hindu religion. In the words of Jamnadas Dwarkadas, a close associate of Gandhiji. "His richness of mind consisted in knowledge garnished through the keen introspection over every inner and outer experience in life, which led him to make him straight at a stick, decision nothing that the world could give and refusing to partake of the so called good things of life. Every breath of his life he devoted to the service of his motherland in particular

and of humanity in general. Love of humanity was identified with his very being and consequently, service selflessly rendered became the permanent condition of his life". In this presidential speech over the prize distribution ceremony of Sanatana Dharma Sabha Gandhiji enjoined upon the young people not merely to repeat parrot-like, the words of our ancient sages, but to show their understanding of those teachings by translating them into action in real life. "An ounce of practise", he declared "is better than tons of theory". He further observed "Life was not merely words nor was sentiment. Life consisted in action to produce results of the establishment of complete harmony between thought, feeling and word. Action emanating through these harmony is the real *Nishkama Karma* the complete action, so strongly urged by Lord Krishna in *Bhagavad Gita*". Writing in his interesting book, "Political Memoirs. Sri Jamnadas Dwarakadas declares as follows. "The two important characteristics of Gandhiji, when I observed throughout my association with him were his strict adherence at any cost, to what he considered to be the Truth and his complete awareness of the highest of the high and the lowest of the low. All through his life and career these two characteristics have been, from my point of view, dominant notes of his life". Writing under the caption, "The Secret of Gandhiji's greatness", Jamnadas Dwarahadas narrates the following incident as follows: It was when Gandhiji saluted the tall figure of Sir Pherozshaw Mehta on his arrival at the party by prostrating in the traditional or ancient fashion, that some of us wondered what great changes this man was going to bring into the life of India. His humility despite his own greatness and his respect for the elders, whose sacrifices did not equal his own, were uncommon in the political life of India in those days. People surrounded him with glamour and a halo But he did his best to refuse them. He was more conscious of his limitation and his fallibility than of the Mahatma's qualities with which he was credited by the people. His life was a veritable Saga-not only of a series of acts of self-sacrifice, but also of his ceaseless and relentless efforts to achieve a state of poise and perfection, which would enable him to view questions that confronted him with a sense of complete justice".

When some admirers of Gandhiji asked him how he was able to function on different levels at the same time answered that his political work was as much a part of his spiritual activities as merely religious works were. In the words of Gandhiji, "You cannot divide spiritual and other works in water tight compartments. What is needed is that one should have a broad spiritual out look on life and translate one's spirituality in everything one is called upon to handle or do". The above statements indicate Gandhiji's spirituality in action and reveal Gandhiji's life style and his secret of success in all his multidimensional activities. Under the caption "Object lessons in Social Ethics" Jamnadas Dwarakadas narrate the following episode to bring out clearly how Gandhiji was a strict disciplinarian and undertook fasting for the mistakes of his ashramites. Mahadev Desai narrated the incident of a disciple, Swami Anand stated that the servant was not only rude to him, but refused to fetch hot water for his bath. "Whatever the provocation may have been" Gandhi said, "How could you beat a human being? First of all, you have been rude to the host's servant and therefore, to the host himself and abused his hospitality and secondly, you have committed the heinous crime of doing violence on the body of a brother human being..... you go to temple and worship the stone image on the plea that there is God in it, and you have no hesitation, no compunction, in beating a human being, who is a living temple of God". The servant was sent for and Swami

Anand was asked to fall at his feet and apologise. The servant refused to forgive him, as the marks of the beatings were still visible on his body. Gandhiji begged of the servant to extend forgiveness to anyone who asked for it and added that it was his duty to forgive anyone, who asked to be forgiven. The servant prostrated before Gandhiji saying that he was a Mahatma and he would obey his orders. Gandhiji was so deeply pained and visibly moved that he asked Swami Anand to go on fast for a couple of days and Gandhiji himself decided not to take food for fortyeight hours, as a measure of purification for the mistake committed by one of his disciplines in the ashram. When Jamnadas Dwarakadas pleaded with Gandhiji that he should not ignore completely the failings of human nature he replied straight away that to him a spotless life in all respects was a sine-qua-non of a person's capacity to enter the field of public service. All the above statements clearly indicate and give an insight into life style of Gandhiji and further prove beyond doubt how some of those sterling and noble traits are relevant and applicable in modern times, especially when people do not realize the importance of dignity and divine nature of human personality as ends in themselves in social and political fields.

Speaking about himself, Gandhiji once remarked, "My failures make me more vigilant than before and intensify my faith. I can see with "the eye of faith" that the observance of the twin doctrines of Truth and Non-violence has possibilities of which we have but very inadequate conception". It is really no exaggeration to say that Gandhiji believed in the infinite potentials of faith and had great trust in the soul's invincible and mighty powers. In the same manner, Goethe, the great German thinker, believed that the epochs of fruitfulness, while then if to-day, the world has number of problems that seem to be insoluble, it is because ours is an age of disbelief and mistrust. To raise an important question like the relevance of Mahatma Gandhi as well as his life-style in modern times is like asking the question. "What is the relevance of the sun to the solar system?" Our present systems, ideologies and life-styles may be relevant and may appear to be appropriate for the present and they are likely to be irrelevant and inappropriate for the future generation. On the other hand, the teachings and precepts of a great humanitarian like Gandhiji are for endless time and he gave us the priceless gifts of self respect and the sense of identify and brotherhood and the matchless weapon of Satyagraha, more powerful and mightier than the atombomb the hydrogen bomb or the Nuclear bomb. Above all, Gandhiji dealt with problems that are timeless and universal, since they spring from weaknesses of human nature and universal, society and the great solutions he found for them were based on eternal values and varieties, his immense influence and his relevance are also timeless and universal. It was Albert Einstein the greatest scientist-philosopher, who summed up Gandhiji's relevance for us in these words, "I regard Gandhi as the only truly great figure of our age....Generations to come will scarcely believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth".

THE SEVAGRAM DECLARATION

In celebration of the centenary of the birth of J.C. Kumarappa, an international Seminar was held at Sevagram, India, from 4th to 8th January 1993, inaugurated by the Vice-President of India. Shri K.R. Narayanan. One hundred and forty-seven participants from fifteen states of India and eight other countries

reviewed dominant regional and world trends around the theme "Towards a Sustainable Economy and Non Violent World Order". The participants unanimously agreed to issue the following Declaration and plan of action.

THREATS TO THE WORLD ORDER

The sustainability of the world order is today threatened from several directions:

- a) Constant violation of the fundamental human rights to the extent that over a billion adults and children are deprived of minimum nutrition, shelter, health care, basic education, political participation, and other components of dignified living as well as the enjoyment of full humanity.
- b) The further widening of the gap between rich and poor, between North and South-resulting in lack of suitable distribution of food and other necessities. Such widening of this gap is due to the failure of international aid and development, continuing exploitation through world trade and industrial production, and the violent disinheritance and oppression of the poorest in a very large number of countries.
- c) The misuse, waste, and monopolization of the Earth's natural resources and the jeopardizing of the environment, the biosphere, and even space.
- d) The forces of greed and corruption, which gravely affect social, economic, and ecological balances.
- e) The forces of sectarianism, both East and West, North and South, and acts of gross violence against fellow human beings and their institutions.

THE NEED FOR A HOLISTIC VISION

- a) We maintain a vision of all peoples working together for a world that will be environmentally sustainable, egalitarian, non-exploitative, decentralized, based on responsible freedom, truth, and nonviolence, promoting both self reliance and interdependence among generations, classes, the sexes and nations-as well as between human beings and Nature. Such a vision excludes structural oppression, and marketbased and war based economies, while it includes the demise of oppressive structures themselves.
- b) The vision is humanistic and pragmatopian rather than utopian, envisages the promotion of community networks and ecozones, with political responsibilities, welcomes the enrichment brought about by a pluralistic society, and incorporates maximum cultural and cross-cultural development.
- c) We nature the vision of a society where every child is born wanted, and brought up in love, where security is rooted in caring, sharing, and living justly, where each gives according to capacity to each according to his or her need, where all can find dignified, satisfying, and purposeful work, and where both work and leisure are creative, and where there is a transparent and mutually respectful relationship between producer and consumer.

THE HURDLES

The obstacles in the way of this vision are many. We considered:

- a) The internal human constraints of egoism, the conflict between conscience and the ego, lack of discipline, the culture of passivity and submission to consumerism, compartmentalized interests, and lack of social responsibility; whereas for many the hurdles are their sense of alienation, their powerlessness, and their lack of identity.
- b) The erosion of values through male dominance, a static social order, religious chauvinism and fundamentalism, division of labour according to caste or 'pecking order', the lack of intercultural dialogue, the lack of traditions (other than the Gandhian example), and the lack of visionary spirit.
- c) The neglect and misuse of local systems resulting in the waste of human resources, a greed-based economy, centralized and exploitative technology, divisive and violent interpersonal and inter-ethnic conflicts, power politics, inequitable ownership, bureaucracy, corruption, high population expansion, illiteracy, and ill-directed educational models.
- d) Activities mostly originating in the North which are highly detrimental to the South's way of life, such as: (the control of economy and production, of information and the media in the hands of a small minority: the fixation of the content and style.

Questions

1. Examine the relevance of Gandhian life style for a changing World.
2. Give examples of life styles influenced by the Gandhian vision.

Test Yourself/Field Work

1. Visit ashrams/communities where alternative life styles are practised.
2. Change your home/institution/community with elements of Gandhian alternative style.

Guideline to Field Work

Go through the 10th unit of the syllabus carefully and implement each one of those items there. Also refer to the 25th lesson of other paper for general guidance.

